the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 19, 2001

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CAN WE DO WITHOUT SAUDI OIL?
IRWIN M. STELZER

# Saddam Hussein's American Apologist

## The strange career of former U.N. arms inspector Scott Ritter

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

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# CREATING COMPUTERS YOU CAN TRUST

Computers are among the most incredible innovations of the 20th century—they transfer trillions of dollars around the world to keep the global economy moving; they manage critical aircraft systems for thousands of flights every day; and they support business operations at companies large and small—from New York to New Delhi.

Yet for all these remarkable advances, the computer age has really just begun. In the coming years, computers will become even more indispensable than—and as commonplace as—electricity is today. As computing becomes more important to society, the high-technology industry will need to make computer systems even more dependable, reliable and secure.

Complete trustworthiness has yet to be achieved in any technology, utility or service—the power grid still surges and fails, water and gas pipes rupture, and telephone lines sometimes drop calls. Yet they are usually there when we need them, and they do what we need them to do. They are, in most respects, trustworthy.

Today's business computer systems are basically dependable, reliable and secure, particularly compared to five or ten years ago. But they still fail at times, and large-scale, crucial business systems require large numbers of talented people to maintain them. They're vulnerable not only to hardware and software failures, but also to malicious abuse and human error. Many people are still reluctant to entrust today's computer systems with their personal information, such as financial and medical records, because they aren't completely certain it will remain private and secure.

The computers of tomorrow will need to be more dependable and more secure than they are today. Computers will have to be *inherently* trustworthy—they will need to be available whenever we need them, have all the features we need, and at the same time keep our personal information secure. Since the computer systems of tomorrow will be vastly more complex, interconnected and interdependent, we will need a fundamentally new approach to designing stable and reliable computers that can increasingly organize and manage themselves. And for the promise of technology to fully bloom, consumers will need to have comparable faith and trust in the companies and organizations that provide and manage computer systems and services.

Creating these dependable systems is a long-term challenge. It will require an increased commitment to basic research focused on problems that could take years to solve—from simple computer-science principles that make software easier to create and vastly more reliable, to practices that ensure accountability and high-quality service. We'll need engineering solutions that make installing and maintaining computer hardware as simple as changing a light bulb. Individuals and companies can solve some of these problems, but others can only be addressed collectively by industry organizations, governments and research communities.

This week, Microsoft is hosting the Trusted Computing Forum 2001, a gathering of industry executives, government officials, technologists and advocacy group leaders committed to making progress on building more trustworthy and secure products, systems, and practices. It could take years to achieve the ultimate goal of private, safe, secure and trusted computing, but the benefits to society will be well worth the effort.

*One in a series of essays on technology and society. More information is available at microsoft.com/issues.*

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AFP Photo / Karim Sahib

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# Bill Clinton, Chattering Ass

Last Wednesday, President Clinton returned to the guest speaker's podium at Georgetown University and proceeded to grace us with his thoughts on international terrorism and suchlike contemporary concerns. President Clinton has decided that:

1. Osama bin Laden's mass murders at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were a direct and deliberate assault on the Clinton legacy, specifically. After all, the former president points out: "The people who died represent, in my view, not only the best of America, but the best of the world that I worked hard for eight years to build." Makes you even madder than you were before, doesn't it?

2. The Western world's hands are not entirely clean. "Indeed, in the first Crusade, when the Christian soldiers took Jerusalem, they . . . proceeded to kill every woman and child who was Muslim on the Temple Mount." And later, in the United States, some similar stuff happened: slavery and dispossession of the Indians and Jim Crow and whatnot. Why, "even today . . . we still have the occasional hate crime rooted in race, religion, or sexual orientation." So don't start feeling all superior or anything, because "terror has a long history."

3. There will be a happy ending, because a certain former president was tireless in preparing us for just such a crisis as we now confront. "In the years that I served, career law enforcement officials working with our intelligence services and others and people around the world prevented many, many more terrorist attacks than were successful," and "worked hard to strengthen the biological weapons convention and to pass the chemical weapons convention," and "worked hard to begin to build our stock of vaccines and antibiotics and to support an organized civilian preparedness," and "tripled our investment in counter-terrorism."

Who was the great president who gave us all these wonderful gifts? Modesty prevents him from saying. ♦

## The Republicans Are in Great Shape!

Great news for Republicans in last week's elections! Actually, we had been under the impression that the Democrats did okay, what with winning the high-profile governor's races in Virginia and New Jersey, but that was before we got our talking points from the National Republican Congressional Committee.

First of all, nervous Republicans can relax, because "The 2001 off-year elections have no bearing on next year's mid-term elections. These races revolved around local issues and local candidates. There were no discernible national trends. This was a status quo election. Both Democrats and Republicans had their share of victories and defeats. Democrats fell short of their predictions that last night's elections would result in a clean sweep."

Second, Republicans shouldn't worry, because the Republican candidates really stunk up the joint. In Virginia, the NRCC notes, "The primary media message from the Earley campaign was opposition to a regional referendum. Polling from the summer indicated this strategy would not work. The Earley campaign ignored this information. Democrat Mark Warner embraced Republican themes portraying himself as a pro-gun, fiscal conservative."

Meanwhile, in New Jersey, "The acting [Republican] Governor failed to endorse the Republican candidate, and the Schundler campaign failed to unite the Republican Party. It also did not help that Schundler campaigned on a platform that was out of touch with NJ voters."

Plus which, even though (see above) off-year elections have no bearing on next year's races, there is one "bellwether for the midterm elections"—that would be the special election that took place in June in Virginia's Fourth Congressional District. And guess what? A Republican won that one!

And besides, did we mention what turkeys those Republican candidates were? "Both Republican gubernatorial candidates got beaten on message (and money), not tactics. Those messages were specifically focused on the two candidates, not broader themes. In Virginia, Warner had a slight advantage on phone and mail contact, while the two campaigns tied on personal and election weekend contact. In New Jersey, McGreevey had a slight advantage on phone and final weekend contact."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the NRCC concludes that its "post election survey clearly shows that by working with President Bush and the House GOP leadership the Republicans will maintain their majority in 2002."

And if they don't, we can be sure it won't be the fault of the national party.

Okay, end of sarcasm. THE SCRAPBOOK understands that one of the things political professionals get paid to do is spin. But a little bit can go a long way. Not to mention, the NRCC likes to brag about the quality of the candidates it recruits. But what kind of message is it sending to its recruits if the explanations of defeat it offers basically come down to candidate stupidity? ♦



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## Profiles in Profiling

THE SCRAPBOOK has no police experience and no particular desire to snipe at the FBI's anthrax investigation, which we are certain is taking place under unimaginably high-pressure conditions. But we couldn't keep our heart from sinking when the FBI profile of the anthrax assailant was released Friday. When the profilers are trotted out, this is usually a sign that the investigation isn't going well. In our book, profiling is a wildly overrated specialty, ranking just this side of voodoo in efficacy.

We remember back when the FBI was certain Richard Jewell was the bomber at the Atlanta Olympics. Do you recall what the profilers were saying then? An AP report quoted them theorizing that the bomber "may not have worked alone" or "he may have been a loner." Well, yes, that did exhaust the permutations.

Now they're telling us that the anthrax murderer was "probably an adult male." If not, we surmise it was almost certainly either a woman or a child, unless there have been advances in robotics we're unaware of.

In a further investigative breakthrough, the FBI theorizes that whoever sent the letters probably took "appropriate protective steps to insure their own safety." What's more, he "probably has a scientific background to some extent or at least a strong interest in science" and may also be "comfortable working with hazardous materials." The real breakthrough, though, is this: "It is highly probable, bordering on certainty, that all three letters were written by the same person." Did anyone who looked at the pictures of the letters ever doubt this?

Yes, the press goads the FBI into such statements. But sometimes, less is more. ♦

## An Odd Statement for a Boxer

"I am against any form or any shape of violence . . ."

—*Australian middleweight Anthony Mundine, in "an open letter to the world," apologizing for saying Americans had "brought [Sept. 11] upon themselves."*

## Our Favorite Website

THE SCRAPBOOK's favorite website, *weeklystandard.com*, has been been up and running in its new incarnation for over a month now, and things are going swell. Which is to say, lots of useful daily coverage has been published there, and to date, it's lost much, much less money than *Boo.com*. Be sure to check in Monday through Friday for the exclusive, online-only essays written by THE SCRAPBOOK's colleagues.

Plus—and this is the really cool part—if you're a WEEKLY STANDARD subscriber, you no longer have to wait for the post office to deliver your magazine. Go online to *weeklystandard.com* and you can download the latest issue in snazzy Adobe PDF format every Saturday morning. ♦



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# Casual

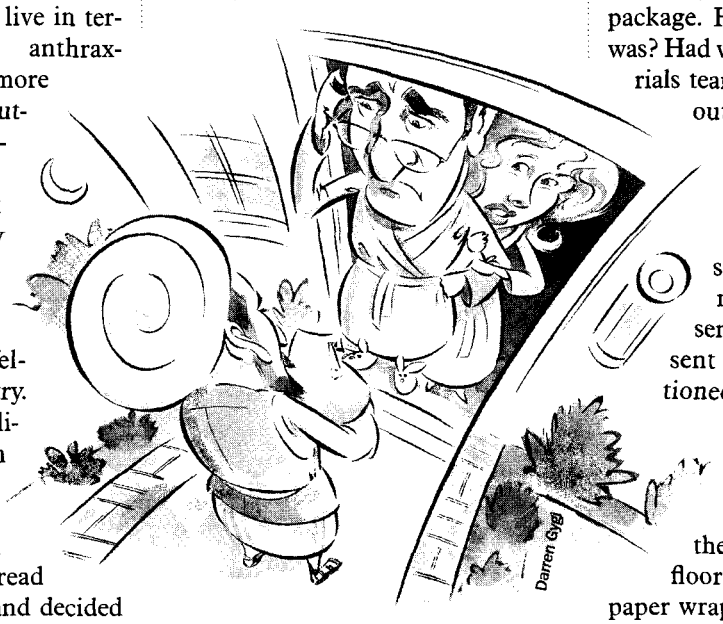
## Trick or Treat?

Halloween night was neither dark nor stormy in Washington, but it did get eerie when my doorbell rang at 1 A.M. My wife Barbara was up late, working on party invitations. I was asleep, though not for long. Barbara opened the door, checked out the caller, and immediately yelled, and yelled loudly, for me to come downstairs.

Now there would have been no reason for me to hop out of bed like a soldier at reveille, except we live in terrorism-conscious and anthrax-spooked Washington, or more precisely a couple miles outside in Alexandria, Virginia. And we don't take the terrorism or anthrax threats lightly, especially since I'm in the media and have been noisily critical of Osama bin Laden, radical Islam, and Muslim fellow travelers in this country. True, I'm not a high-visibility anchor like Tom Brokaw. But you never know who might have caught my comments on Fox News Channel or read The Weekly Standard and decided to take hostile action.

Of course we don't get many late-night visitors either—other than friends of my son Freddy, who's 16. And the person at the door was no teenager. He was a Middle Eastern-looking man holding a package. And I mean very Middle Eastern-looking. His small white car was parked in our driveway. He was smiling. He wasn't wearing a uniform from a carry-out.

Speaking with a heavy accent, the man said he was delivering the sandwich we'd ordered. *Sandwich we'd ordered? At 1 A.M. on a weeknight?* This struck us as strange since we hadn't ordered anything. Barbara figured it must have been Freddy, who sometimes stays up late doing homework. She scrounged up some money and paid the delivery man (including a tip). The fellow departed. We examined the package. The sandwich—or whatever was inside—felt warm and smelled like some kind of food. But it was wrapped in paper with no markings from any carry-out or food store. Suspicious, no? And we didn't know any carry-out that stayed open this late anyway. We didn't open the package, for safety reasons.




Freddy, it turned out, was sound asleep. So maybe it was the college kid who lives next door who'd ordered the sandwich. The light was on in his room. We left the package on the front stoop in case he came looking for it.

The next morning, it was still there. If we left it outside much longer, our two dogs or other dogs from the neighborhood were sure to get hold of it. I wrapped my hand in a paper towel, picked up the package, put it in a plastic grocery bag, and deposited it in a trash can in the garage. Our conclusion: It was a mistaken delivery or a practical joke. Nothing for us or Tom Ridge to worry about.

Soon the plot thickened. The kid next door hadn't ordered a sandwich. Nor had anyone else in the neighborhood. At school, no one asked Freddy if—ha, ha, ha—he'd got a late delivery at home. Nobody knew of a carry-out that was open that late on a weeknight.

Barbara mentioned the mysterious delivery to her friends at a Bible study. They were suspicious. Our neighbors didn't like the looks of the whole situation either, and I couldn't blame them. Barbara finally called the local police station. She was told to throw the package away and leave it at that.

This placated no one. Telephone calls began coming in from friends and neighbors, inquiring about the package. Had we found out what it was? Had we gotten a hazardous materials team to come by and check it out? The answer was no—until three days later when a neighbor pleaded with us to do something.

Barbara called 911. They said to call the fire department, which immediately sent a large fire engine. It also sent a hazmat guy. He questioned us about the circumstances of the package's arrival and asked to see it.

In the garage, he plucked the package from the trash can. He put it on the floor and began to remove the paper wrapping. A sandwich-shaped object was inside, wrapped in aluminum foil. There was barely legible writing on it. I thought it might be Arabic. Suddenly I feared the worst. It flashed through my mind that it might bear a message like "Death to America" or "Slay the Infidel." Perhaps we should have summoned the hazmat inspector days before. A lethal biochemical might have seeped out and wafted around the neighborhood. I asked the hazmat man what it said. He looked up from the package. "What it says," the hazmat guy announced, "is 'bacon cheeseburger.'"

**Fred Barnes**



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## Give Bush a Break

I find David Tell's intellectual nit-picking of the "Bushies" in his editorial "To Tell the Truth" (Nov. 5) to be unfair, a damning with faint praise and a lack of appreciation for the situation the administration is dealing with. His bias was apparent in his early comment that "the Bush executive branch has exhibited a pronounced weakness for spin."

What Tell does not address is that "spin" seems to be the only effective way to communicate with today's entertainment-oriented population. Bill Clinton was the master of spin, so a fairer comment would have been that the "Bushies" simply need to get better at it.

Tell also contends that Americans are not a nation of children. Where has he been? Jack proved smarter spending food money on magic beans.

He is also incorrect in that telling the truth *can* for politicians be a threatening and scary business with the media looking for every opportunity to make them look inept. Witness Tell's own attack on White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, who asserted that those who leaked information were too unsure to put their own name on their comments.

Tell should try to survive reporter disingenuousness. Better yet, he should try his hand at telling the public to remain alert while behaving as if nothing is going on, as President Bush must.

Give the Bushies a break. So far, they have done well, or at least the public seems to think so.

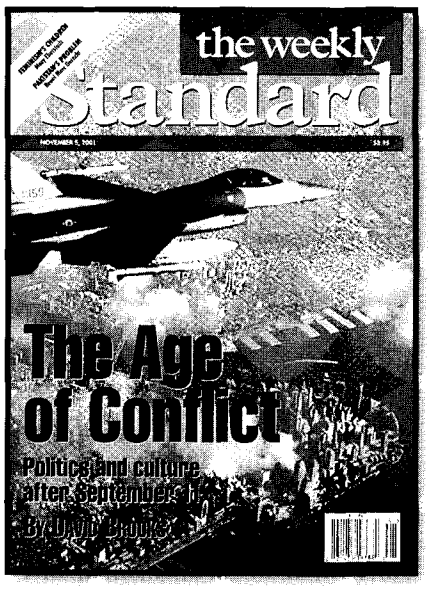
Wayne G. Skaggs
*Wimberley, TX*

## The President's Calling

In "Man with a Mission" (Oct. 8), Fred Barnes floats the contention that President Bush has been born again in the wake of the terrorist attacks, that he is invigorated with a new calling, and that he may have begun to emerge as a Truman for our times—assertions that Bush and the White House staff promote eagerly. But the important issue for his presidency and the country is not whether Bush feels he has a new calling, but whether he has the character and leadership qualities to fulfill the demands that calling imposes.

In light of President Bush's actions thus far, Barnes's article leaves us little genuine cause to be optimistic. For Bush has in fact done little to suggest that he can't be pushed, pulled, bullied, or conned into reckless and unnecessary compromises and concessions.

The president has too often sacrificed his anti-terrorist agenda for the sake of coalition-building, undermining Israeli security in the process. He has needlessly yielded ground on domestic policy for the sake of Democratic support for his war effort—support which he would likely have gotten in large measure anyway. And he has so far avoided firing officials and bureaucrats in the security establishment who failed to prevent the events of Sept. 11 from happening, thereby exhibiting his unwillingness to incur the disfavor of the bureaucracy.




If Bush's belief in his new calling is anything more than rhetorical posturing, let him prove it by his behavior—his willingness to hold to his agenda and to risk the disfavor of those who doubt the seriousness of his resolve.

Roger Silverstein
*New York, NY*

## Our New Friends

While I welcome The Scrapbook's characterization of me as a "good guy" (Oct. 22), I must correct the notion that The Weekly Standard hasn't agreed with anything I've written "in years." If memory serves me, my analysis of John McCain's virtues during the 2000 presidential campaign was strikingly similar to some at The Weekly Standard. While we still disagree on plenty, I can see a new politics is taking shape for I am with The Weekly Standard in pro-war solidarity.

Jonathan Alter
*Newsweek*
*New York, NY*

Since Sept. 11, my wife has been regularly reading my copy of The Weekly Standard, which is unusual given she is a liberal feminist and pacifist. What is more unusual is that she finds the articles insightful and intelligent, and she agrees with them. She understands our country is at war, and that military force must be used. What's more, she no longer likes it when people put America down, and she lets them know it.

When she saw the winner of The Scrapbook's continuing "Surprisingly Good Guys List" (Nov. 12), the German Navy, she cried profusely. It evoked in her memories of her father, who was of German descent and a U.S. Army Air Corps captain who flew over 50 bombing missions in Germany during World War II and received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The irony of her tears was not lost on her. Through the memory and spirit of her father she has a living link to the sacrifice, courage, and daring of those soldiers in World War II who made it possible that Germany is a democratic ally of the United States today.

Martin Lavengood
*Fort Wayne, IN*

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# Getting Serious

Is the Bush administration really getting serious about fighting the war on terrorism?

On the one hand, there was still plenty of happy-talk flying fast and furious this past week. President Bush's speech Thursday night was upbeat and spared him media attacks for not addressing the nation on homeland security. But the American people don't really need to be told how to lead their lives. They need to see their government doing its job, both at home and abroad.

What they've seen too often instead are government agencies spinning madly to make it look like they're on top of the situation. The FBI, which has run itself into a brick wall in the anthrax investigation, has been declaring confidently that it has "a plan" and is sticking to it. The fact that the FBI hasn't the vaguest clue who sent the anthrax letters hasn't stopped it from leaking like mad the implausible "theory" that it may have been the work of some domestic extremist.

*The commander in the region has seemed more interested in preserving "the easiest exit strategy we've had in years" than in crushing the Taliban.*

Meanwhile, on the day President Bush gave his "Let's Roll" speech, Attorney General John Ashcroft embarrassingly declared that the United States had "emerged victorious in the opening battle in the war on terrorism." Why? Because "two periods of extremely high threat have passed" without an additional attack. Sorry, but glad as we are that a couple of weeks have gone by without another terrorist catastrophe, that is not a "victory."

On the other hand, there are hopeful signs. As this magazine goes to press, there are indications that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's efforts to increase the pace and violence of the American offensive in Afghanistan are beginning to bear fruit on the ground. The Northern Alliance seems to be making progress in its effort to capture the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif—a key stepping stone to removing the Taliban government in Kabul.

Until now, top American military officials, despite Rumsfeld's prodding, have been slow to escalate and have been resisting the call by civilian officials for a wider ground war. The commander in the region, General Tommy Franks, has seemed more interested in preserving what he recently called "the easiest exit strategy we've had in years" than in crushing the Taliban. According to our sources, deputy national security adviser Stephen Hadley recently expressed deep frustration with the military brass for its slow-as-molasses approach to the war. There is reason to believe he was reflecting the views of his boss, Condoleezza Rice. But four-star generals don't take orders from deputy national security advisers, or even from national security advisers. When will President Bush step in and find himself a Grant to take over from the McClellans?

Another sign of seriousness on the part of the administration would be greater urgency in planning for a military campaign against Iraq. The *New York Times* reported this past week that Saddam Hussein maintained a secret terrorist training camp for Islamic radicals from other countries, and that among the lessons taught at the terrorist school was how to hijack a passenger plane without weapons. We know that the mastermind of the September 11 attack, Mohamed Atta, held meetings a few months before with an Iraqi intelligence official in Prague. And Iraq is the only nation in the world, other than the United States and Russia, to have developed the kind of sophisticated anthrax that appeared in the letter sent to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle. What will it take for the FBI and the CIA to start connecting the dots here? A signed confession from Saddam?

The good news is that the winds appear to be shifting within the Bush administration on the Iraq question. While Secretary of State Colin Powell continues to promise the Arab world that the administration has no plans to go after Iraq, Condoleezza Rice seems to be throwing her considerable influence on the side of the hawks at the Pentagon. Rice said publicly last week, referring to Saddam's continuing efforts to build and stockpile weapons of mass destruction, that "there is plenty of reason to watch Iraq." Unlike Powell, she did not rule out any response. Privately, we have learned, she's even tougher. Rice recently told a visiting diplomat that the administration would deal with Iraq "at the right time" and that



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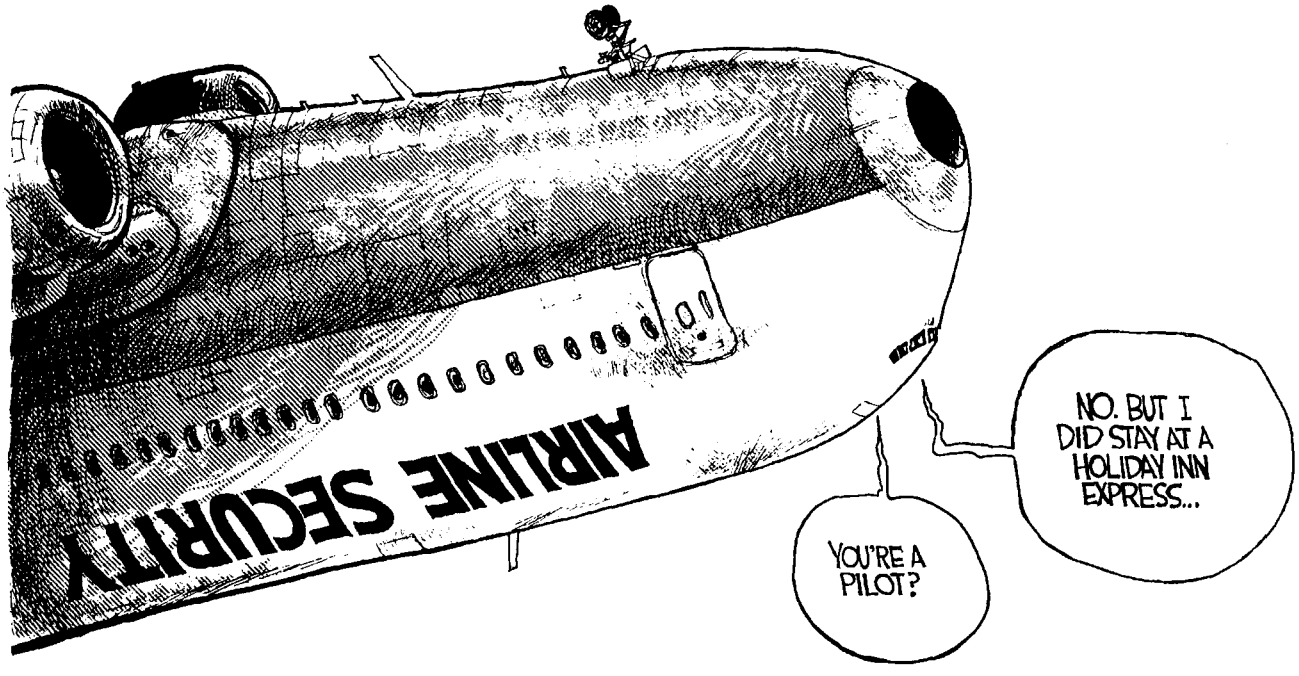
"we don't need a smoking gun" before taking action.

Further evidence that Rice may be separating herself from the Powell State Department came in her remarks rejecting a meeting between President Bush and Yasser Arafat at the United Nations. Arafat cannot claim to be a help in the war on terrorism, Rice warned, while he continues to "hug" Hezbollah and Hamas, two terrorist organizations that until recently the Bush administration had pretty much ignored in the interest of preserving Powell's Arab coalition. Although she has kept a low profile, the national security adviser probably remains the most influential person on the president's foreign policy team. Her recent statements are the best sign yet of the administration's increasing seriousness about fighting this war.

Finally, there is the question of the defense budget. We leave it to President Bush and his advisers to determine the best way of building our defenses while controlling pork barrel spending. But one thing is painfully obvious: There will have to be significant, sustained increases in spending on the armed forces. The United States is likely headed into a ground war of some size and duration in Afghanistan. The odds that we may soon be at war in Iraq grow daily. And the United States has other important security interests and obligations elsewhere in the world, especially in East Asia. Right now we simply do not have enough troops or weapons to carry out these missions. We will need to recruit more soldiers and procure more weapons—or risk losing the war on terrorism. But more troops cost money. As Thomas Donnelly of the Project for the New American Century has noted, recruiting, training, and equipping an additional 50,000 active-duty soldiers for the Army alone will cost an additional $15 billion per year. Right now, the president's total request for an increase in defense spending is $20 billion. There will have to be much more.

It's now two months since September 11. The administration's response has been in certain respects serious and impressive, in other respects uncertain and tentative. President Bush set a high standard for himself last Thursday when he closed his speech by invoking the memory of Todd Beamer and his fellow passengers on United Flight 93, saying, "Let's roll." It's a call the administration should heed.

*—Robert Kagan and William Kristol*




Michael Ramirez

IF THE AIRLINES HIRED PILOTS THE SAME WAY THEY HIRE THEIR SECURITY...



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# Fear Not the Taliban

## They're the ones who should fear us.

**BY FREDERICK W. KAGAN**

AMERICAN STRATEGY in the war against Afghanistan has been seriously hampered by the culture of fear that reigns in Washington. We are afraid of "nation-building." We are afraid that the coalition might collapse. We are afraid of Muslim reaction to military operations during Ramadan. We are afraid of inserting ground forces because we are afraid of taking casualties. We are afraid of the Afghan winter. Above all, we are afraid of failure.

It is time to break out of this cycle of fear—a cycle that has restricted American strategy and policy-making ever since the disaster of Mogadishu in 1993. It is time, as great generals always say, to stop thinking about what the enemy can do to us and start thinking about what we can do to the enemy. Even more, it is time to finish thinking and start doing—and soon.

We can do a lot more than we are doing now. The truth is that, although the Afghans are tough, we are tough, too. We do not need to be afraid of confronting the Taliban in a close fight. Beyond that, however, we should not ignore the advantages that our technology gives us. War in Afghanistan is about rapid tactical and operational movement, and our technology, especially our helicopters, gives us an enormous edge in that realm. The Soviets had few problems in stand-up shoot-outs with large numbers of mujahedeen, and we would have fewer.

The winter is a more serious issue. Let us put aside the question of whether or not we would be able to conduct operations in the winter, however—something that Soviet experience actually suggests is more possible than many think—and ask a different question. Given that operations may largely cease over the winter, is it better for them to cease with the Taliban in control of the government and major population centers, or with us in control? It seems obvious that it would be better for the spring campaigning season to start with us in control. That is why the comments of General Tommy Franks (made before the recent advance of the Northern Alliance) were so puzzling. Franks, head of U.S. Central Command and the man running military operations in the region, insisted that U.S. military operations were not directed at occupying key spots in Afghanistan: "We are not occupying strategic terrain like Mazar-e-Sharif or like Kandahar. . . . That's not our approach."

Why not? Because, as Franks explained, avoiding cities means we'll have "the easiest exit strategy we've had in years." But surely military strategy—which would dictate seizing key strategic points—needs to trump exit strategy. One reason it may not be doing so is our fear of nation-building.

An excessive fear of nation-building is pernicious and serious. If our aim is to eliminate the threat of terrorism based in Afghanistan, then establishing a reasonably stable government there is essential. Otherwise, civil wars will continue, inviting extremism and schooling people in violence. There will be nothing to prevent terrorists from continuing to use the country as a base. There is no good endgame for this conflict that does not involve nation-building.

Nor is there any prospect of successful nation-building unless it is *our* ground forces that seize and hold the critical areas in the country. Attempting to subcontract the ground war to the Northern Alliance or any other opposition group will simply give that group an overwhelming voice in determining the postwar government. How will we then ensure that a reasonable coalition government with a chance for stability comes to power? Will we start bombing the Northern Alliance? Or its enemies? It is to be hoped not. The only rational way forward is for us to seize control of the situation and turn it in a direction that suits us.

That makes the selection of an intelligent strategy much more clear-cut. We need at once to insert significant ground forces—at least two divisions (some 50,000 troops) and perhaps more—in order to seize and hold key cities. It will not be militarily difficult to do that. The Taliban do not have a strong hold on the country, and the ranks of their army, which is neither well trained nor well disciplined, have been severely thinned in recent weeks. Once established in country, we can ourselves undertake, directly and on the ground, to root out remaining terrorist cells and Taliban strongholds. We can also work to reestablish a decent infrastructure in Afghanistan, both physical and political, and lay the groundwork for stabilizing the situation there. If it turns out that this process is interrupted by the winter, so be it—at least let us start next spring with the situation under our control.

Will the Taliban take to the hills and wage guerrilla attacks on us? Perhaps. If we are correct that they do not enjoy widespread support, then such attacks will be controllable. (As an aside: If we are wrong and they do enjoy widespread support, then our airpower policy is absolutely hopeless.) It may be necessary to follow them into the hills—but we are equipped for that. America's heliborne forces are the best in the world, and will have a great deal of success in

*Frederick W. Kagan is a military historian and the co-author of* While America Sleeps.



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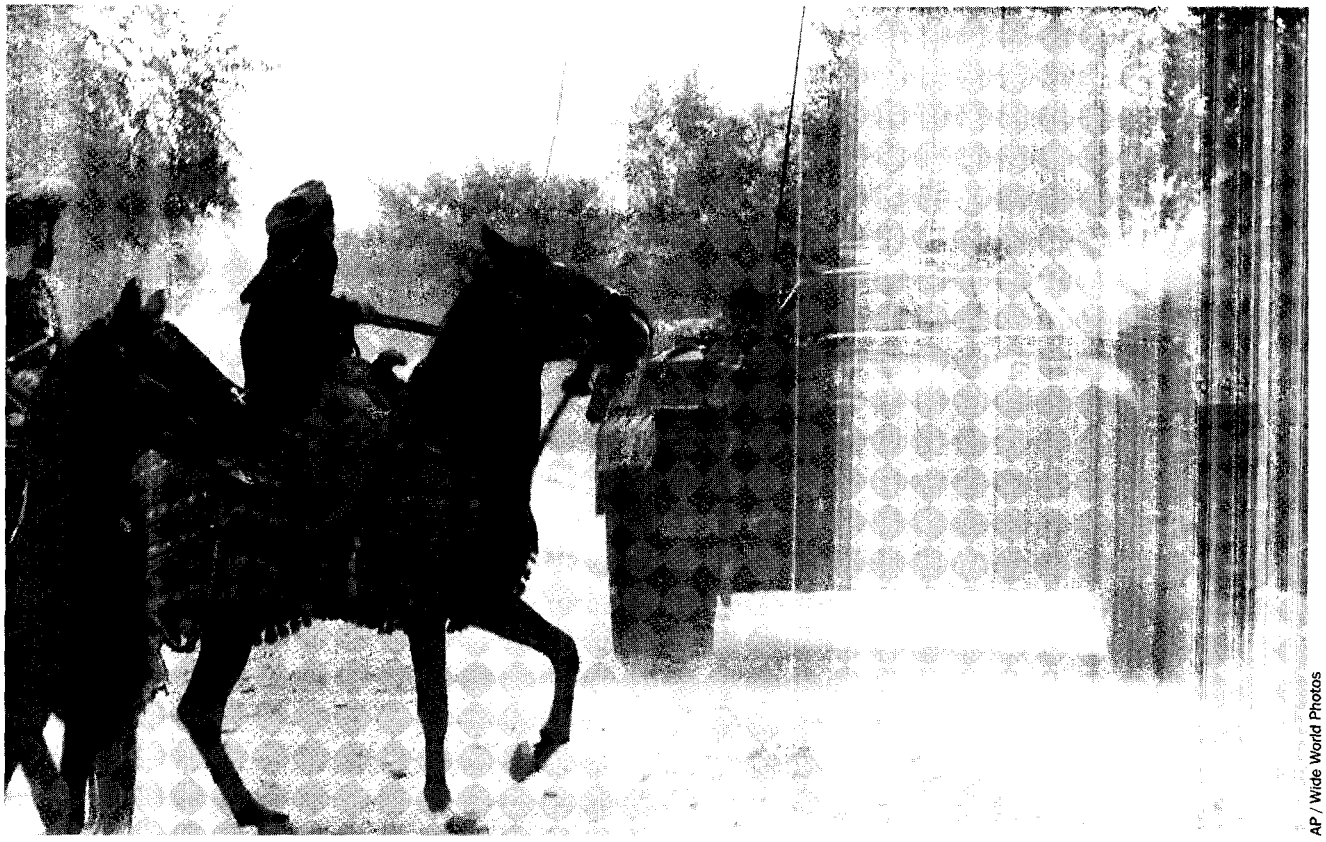

AP / Wide World Photos

*Northern Alliance horsemen in the Takhar province, Nov. 9, 2001*

isolating and destroying guerrilla bands. Our well-trained and physically fit volunteer army will not make the mistakes that the Soviets did tactically, and they will face a much weaker foe. After all, the Soviets were fighting not simply the mujahedeen, they were fighting the world, for the United States, Iran, Pakistan, and China all supported and supplied the mujahedeen. Whatever happens to the coalition today, we can expect to avoid that situation.

There is every prospect, therefore, of military success if we can overcome our fears about fighting the Afghans and facing the winter. There remain our fears about Ramadan and the stability of the coalition. But it is one thing for us to be simply bombing during Ramadan, and another thing again for us to be doing something positive for the Afghan people on the ground, even if we have to continue some bombing. At the end of the day, however, acting during Ramadan poses less danger than not acting—the danger that the Taliban will consolidate their hold during the winter and start to look as though they might survive. That could prove disastrous, both inside Afghanistan and outside.

Many Muslim states, after all, have joined one of several loose coalitions supporting portions of our anti-terrorism campaign. By doing so, those regimes have made themselves targets for terrorists. And they have incurred the risk of alienating their own people, who might be uncomfortable about supporting Western attacks on a Muslim state. These facts are usually used to justify *inaction*, but there is a flip side to the equation.

How long can Pakistan, to name one critical member of the coalition, sustain a bombing campaign that seems not to be working? How long before other Muslim states start to turn away in fear that, as in 1991, we will fail to finish off the foe they have joined us in defying? The coalition is more likely to evaporate from delay and procrastination than from too-hasty or too-powerful action.

Above all, we must abandon fear and focus on our goals. It is not enough to eliminate al Qaeda or overthrow the Taliban, our immediate objectives. Neither is it enough simply to say that we aim to end terrorism. Instead, we must state specifically and categorically what is to be done:

- Replace the Taliban with a stable Afghan regime committed to functioning as a respectable member of the international system and preventing the use of its territory and resources for the support of terrorism.
- Eliminate to the best of our ability known terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad.
- Replace Saddam Hussein's criminal regime before he finds a way to use the chemical and biological weapons we know he is developing for a devastating attack on the United States.

To achieve these aims will require significant rearmament, necessitating major increases in defense funding at a time when a nervous administration would prefer to focus on stimulating the economy. The economy is important, but winning the war is nonnegotiable. We no longer can ask why we should fight in a far-off land of which we know nothing—the connection between Kabul and New York is painfully clear. This is not a time for half-measures or turning inward. Above all, it is not a time for fear. It is a time for leadership that lives up to the quality of the American people, who have shown themselves ready for sacrifice. And it is a time for decisive action. ♦



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# Terrorists and the Law of War

## The case for military tribunals.

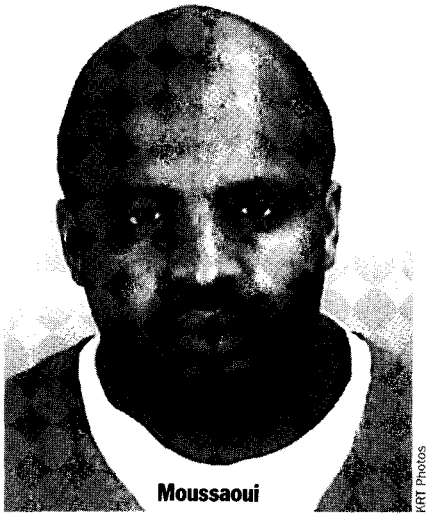
**BY JEROME M. MARCUS**

THE FRENCH-MOROCCAN terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui made a series of suspicion-provoking blunders that landed him in a Minnesota jail in mid August. Otherwise, the 33-year-old Moussaoui would likely have been a "fifth hijacker" on board United Flight 93, which crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside on September 11. The Justice Department hinted last week that it would indict him. With that move, the Bush administration has telegraphed its approach to the terrorists it takes into custody. It will treat them not as a military threat but as a criminal ring to be dealt with in normal criminal trials.

That's a bad thing. Terrorists would be tried in federal court, where criminal trials are public spectacles. Intelligence sources and methods will be endangered by publication of prosecutors' evidence. So the government will have to choose between (a) going to trial without its best evidence, (b) charging only those lesser offenses for which such evidence is unnecessary, and (c) dropping a case altogether. Until we come up with a better way of doing things, we risk watching known terrorist accomplices stonewall prosecutors and get away with a slap on the wrist for visa infractions.

A small measure of protection against intelligence leaks is offered by the Classified Information Procedure Act—but only *before* a case goes to trial. Once it does, defendants are entitled to see all the government's evidence against them. Defendants who claim a "shared interest" can communicate secretly with one another through their lawyers. They can thereby get their stories straight and share intelligence that will keep accomplices from getting arrested in the first place.

In other words, a criminal-trial strategy will force us to choose between punishing those who have committed mass murder in the past and monitoring those who will do so in the future. Such a system is inappropriate for bringing terrorists to justice. It's also beginning to warp America's military plans. The *Washington Times* reported last week of a "private consensus in the administration that capturing bin Laden alive would present the government with major problems. They include having to divulge intelligence sources and methods at a trial."



Moussaoui

KRT Photos

But there is a way out: military commissions. Such tribunals, created by the president and presided over by an officer of the U.S. Armed Forces, sit to determine whether a defendant has violated the laws of war. Military officers represent both the prosecution and the defense. A jury of American soldiers hears the evidence. There is a precedent for military commissions. With the blessing of the Supreme Court, one was set up in 1942 to try German saboteurs. No formal declaration of war would be necessary to establish such tribunals, since they can be empaneled to apply not only the U.S. Code of Military Justice but also the laws of war themselves—under which a collaborator in the September 11 attack would be considered an unlawful belligerent subject to execution.

Beyond that, it is not crystal clear how military commissions would work in a terrorist context. Congressional researchers are now looking into whether commissions can adjudicate the guilt of U.S. citizens acting as fifth-columnists; they are also wondering whether such tribunals can sit outside the United States, to try terrorist leaders caught in Afghanistan or elsewhere. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has tapped one of its lawyers to research the pros and cons of military commissions.

Political obstacles to such commissions are likely to be more theoretical than real. Whether the president's inherent constitutional authority as commander in chief permits him to call military trials without congressional approval is a question worthy of litigation. But if, as seems likely, Congress would bless such commissions, this nice constitutional question needn't arise.

Some congressional staffers worry about the political impact of a judicial function being carried out by uniformed soldiers rather than robed judges. But there is a political benefit as well: Prosecuting terrorists, and those who actively help them, for murdering noncombatants—rather than for money laundering, or overstaying a visa—will put at center stage, the way no criminal trial can, the ultimate vileness of their deeds. ♦

*Jerome M. Marcus, a lawyer in Philadelphia, has worked in the legal adviser's office of the State Department.*



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# Bloomberg's Bedfellows

## As the mayoral election shows, racial politics are alive and well in New York. BY FRED SIEGEL

*New York*

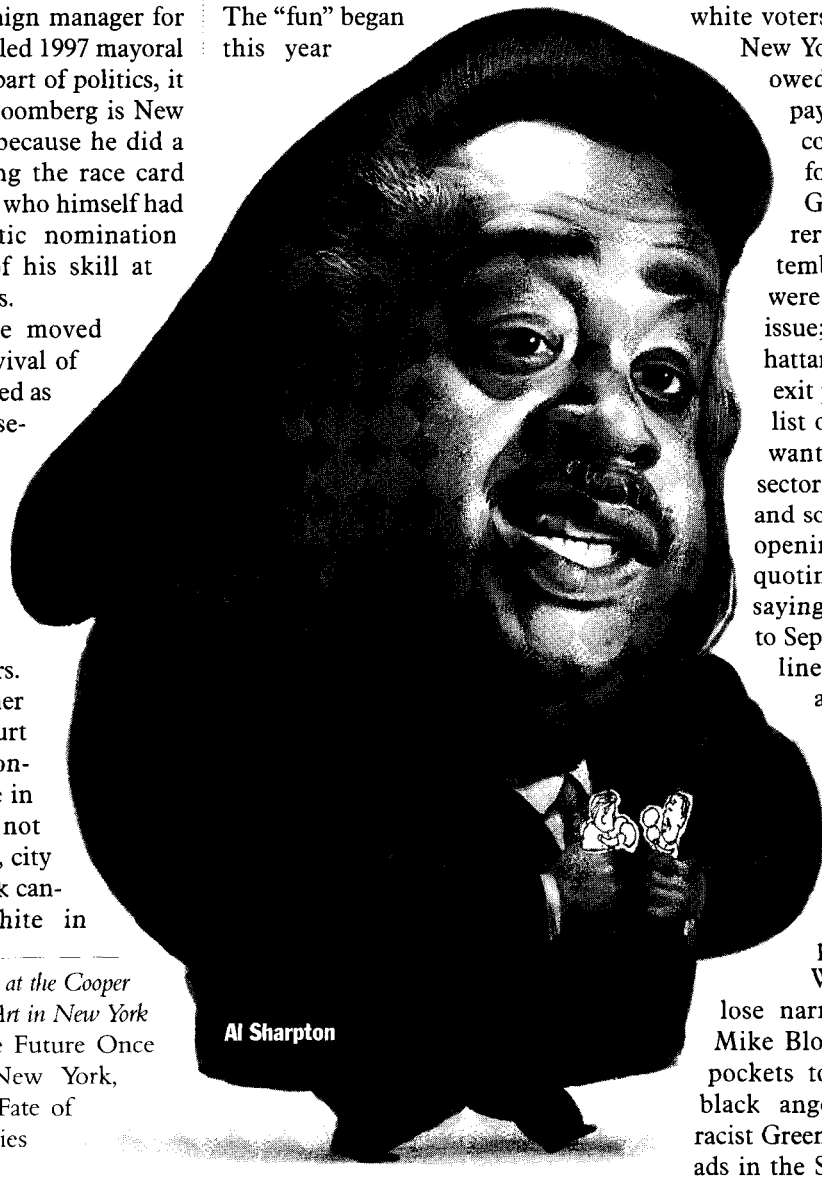
Call it the New York Paradox: Politically, it's always 1968. Racial tensions, though far lower than they were thirty, or even ten, years ago, still define city elections. In Gotham, explains Jim Andrews, the campaign manager for Ruth Messinger's failed 1997 mayoral bid, "race isn't just part of politics, it is politics." Mike Bloomberg is New York's mayor-elect because he did a brilliant job of using the race card against Mark Green, who himself had won the Democratic nomination precisely because of his skill at playing racial politics.

Other cities have moved on. In the urban revival of the 1990s, race receded as a political factor elsewhere. Seattle, Houston, Dallas, Denver, San Francisco, and Minneapolis, all of which are less than a third black, elected African-American mayors. In the words of former Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, "race continues to be an issue in our elections, but not *the* issue." This year, city elections pitted black candidates against white in Cincinnati (which recently experienced racial rioting), Minneapolis, Cleveland, and Houston (where there was also a Latino candidate). And all of these elections were remarkable for their absence of racial rancor.

New York was different. The "fun" began this year when Bronx borough president and Democratic mayoral candidate Freddy Ferrer created a black-Latino alliance with Al Sharpton, the city's leading racial demagogue. Ferrer's campaign theme of "the other New York" was designed to mobilize the Latino and black voters who were supposed to have been left out of the Giuliani boom of the 1990s. The numbers show they weren't. But Ferrer understood the first rule of New York's racialized politics: The best way to mobilize voters is to stoke the resentments that have long been cultivated by the press and the city's ethnic leaders.

Ferrer's Democratic rival Mark Green capitalized on the fact that white voters heard Ferrer's "other New York" rhetoric as "We're owed and you're going to pay for it." In their closely contested runoff election for the Democratic nod, Green jumped on Ferrer's non-response to September 11. Ferrer voters were little interested in the issue; rebuilding lower Manhattan was, according to the exit polls, dead last on their list of priorities. What they wanted was more public-sector spending on education and social services. Seeing an opening, Green ran a TV ad quoting the *New York Times* saying that Ferrer's reaction to September 11 was "borderline irresponsible." Ferrer and his allies, including Bronx political boss Roberto Ramirez and Sharpton, reacted with howls of outrage. There were cries of "racism," and the ad was compared to a "lynching."

When Ferrer went on to lose narrowly, media magnate Mike Bloomberg used his deep pockets to play off Latino and black anger at the supposedly racist Green. He ran a blitzkreig of ads in the Spanish-language media



Al Sharpton

Illustration by Earl Kelerry

*Fred Siegel is a professor at the Cooper Union for Science and Art in New York and the author of* The Future Once Happened Here: New York, D.C., L.A. and the Fate of America's Big Cities *(Encounter Press).*



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denouncing Green, who had devoted most of his adult life to left-liberal causes like attacking Giuliani's police department. According to the rules of New York politics, any criticism of a non-white candidate is ipso facto racist. Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic national chairman, agrees. He's invited Sharpton's critics to leave the Democratic party.

Spreading his wealth, Bloomberg won the backing of the city's race hustlers, not to mention anti-Semites Lenora Fulani and Wilbert Tatum. By Election Day, November 6, Bloomberg was in a de facto alliance with Sharpton and Ferrer to suppress the black and Latino vote for Green. They succeeded and Bloomberg won with the 59,000 votes provided by Marxist Fulani's Independence party line.

Strangely enough, Green, the victim of his own newfound scruples, wasn't willing to cut deals with the race hustlers; Bloomberg was. Green, who never openly criticized the race game, feared being indebted to the likes of Al Sharpton, lest it undermine his ability to govern effectively. Bloomberg looked at it differently and got elected, like former governor Nelson Rockefeller and former mayor John Lindsay, with an incongruous collection of conservative voters—in this case Giuliani backers and Giuliani haters. On the morning after he won, Bloomberg met with Ferrer, and the next day he made a point of shaking hands publicly with Sharpton, the man Giuliani had refused even to meet, let alone bargain with, for eight years.

New York's racialized political culture has been shaped by two distinctive features. First there is the sheer size of the political prize. The vast public sector, paid for with a $40 billion budget, employs directly or indirectly about a third of the work force. In the Bronx that portion rises to nearly half. Second, in other cities—like Cleveland, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and Seattle, where elections are nonpartisan—candidates have to appeal to a broad swath of the electorate. In New York, which is five-to-one Democratic, you can usually win the prize simply by winning the Democratic primary. That means that an operator like Sharpton who can deliver about 25,000 votes becomes a force to be feared.

Rudy called the race hustlers' bluff and delivered eight years of success. Bloomberg, who like Rockefeller is politically promiscuous, has begun his reign by embracing the people Giuliani shunned. But can he govern with the coalition that helped him win? The Giuliani voters who backed Bloomberg are only now waking up to the fact that Rudy's heir is already reversing Rudy's policies. The two halves of the Bloomberg coalition are a bit like drunk swingers who barely remember the night before and wake up asking, "What have I gotten myself into?" Bloomberg is betting that, like Rockefeller, he can use his personal fortune to smooth over the differences. He may be right, but then again he may find that it's a lot easier to cut a deal than to get his new partners to keep it. ♦

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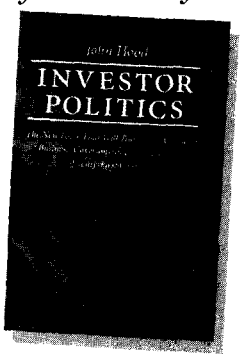


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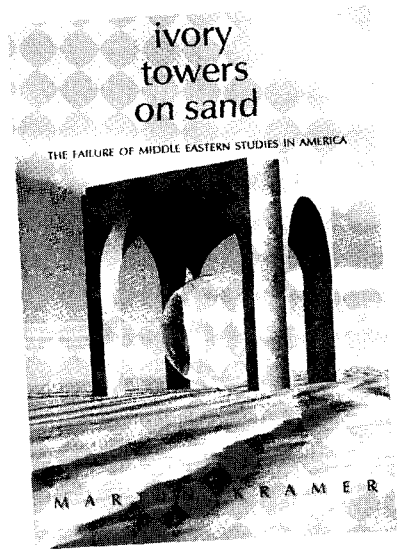
# The Scandal of Middle East Studies

## Bankrupt scholarship and foolish policy advice, subsidized by the taxpayer. BY STANLEY KURTZ

As CONGRESS prepares to convene hearings on the intelligence failures exposed by September 11, it is important to recognize that the failures go beyond the dearth of agents on the ground in the Middle East and the shortage of Arabic speakers at the CIA. Our neglect of the terrorist threat is of long standing and reflects, among other things, the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of American academic programs in Middle Eastern studies.




Considering the wide publicity given to Osama bin Laden's activities, American scholars should have been onto him years ago. They should have been churning out analyses of his ideology and appeal and alerting policymakers to the threat he posed to the United States. Instead, they deliberately avoided the topic of Islamic terrorism and—in their writings, their testimony before Congress, and their advice to the intelligence community—argued that America could bring peace and democracy to the Middle East only by *supporting* Islamic fundamentalists.

It is a dismal story, recounted in Martin Kramer's unsparing new study *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*, commissioned by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Kramer is the editor of the *Middle East Quarterly* and a former director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. He holds graduate degrees from Princeton and Columbia, has taught at the University of Chicago, Cornell, and Georgetown, and is the author of six books on the Middle East.

The story begins in the late 1940s, when Middle East "area studies" sprouted in American universities. The founders of this discipline made a pitch for government funding on grounds of national interest. They argued, for example, that federal support for American-staffed universities in places like Beirut would strengthen liberal forces in the region, serving as a bulwark against both communism and indigenous movements of sectarian reaction. To a degree, their pitch was self-interested. By breaking with the European model of learning based on the command of ancient and modern languages, and instead framing their object of study as a region of strategic value to the nation, apolitical scholars could contemplate fifteenth-century Islamic architecture and still do it on the government's dime.

Whatever their personal views, the postwar generation, Kramer says, were "careful to keep their politics outside the fences they erected around the field." But these were men "of patriotic disposition," who had served their country in war and felt no aversion to maintaining ties to Washington. The government periodically opened its classified archives to scholars, but for the most part was content to reap the benefits of a broad and gradually accumulating scholarly knowledge of the region.

In those early days, the ruling paradigm in Middle Eastern studies was the investigation of "development" or "modernization." Drawing on social science texts like Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), scholars argued that the Middle East had embarked upon a path of gradual but inevitable secularization, urbanization, industrialization, and political participation. The region was bound to become modern—that is, more like the United States—and American students saw their job as understanding that process and even helping it along.

Two events unanticipated by Middle East experts brought the modernization paradigm crashing to the ground: the disintegration of Lebanon and the Shiite revolution in Iran. Lebanon had been the center of cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and American influence in the Arab world before it was engulfed in civil war in 1975. And Shah Reza Pahlavi had been a leading modernizer. His overthrow by Islamic theocrats in 1979 stunned Americans.

Also in the late seventies, the radical students of the 1960s began to enter the professoriate. The way was cleared for them to wrest power from the Middle East studies establishment when Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) crystallized a new understanding of the field. The founding text of postcolonial studies, *Orientalism* effectively delegitimated all previous scholarship on the Middle East by branding it as racist. Said drew no

*Stanley Kurtz is a research fellow at the Hudson Institute.*



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distinction between the most ignorant and bigoted remarks of nineteenth-century colonialists and the most accomplished pronouncements of contemporary Western scholars: All Western knowledge of the East was intrinsically tainted with imperialism. Any scholarly characterization of the distinctive nature of Islamic civilization or of Middle Eastern culture was taken by Said to be a roundabout justification for Western rule of the irrational natives.

However tendentious the argument of *Orientalism*, it was carefully drawn—all of it, that is, but the final chapter, which strongly indicted contemporary scholarship as neocolonialist. This Kramer says was superficial, unsubstantiated, and "lazy." Said offered virtually no evidence to support his bold condemnations and overlooked vast tracts of scholarly work that cut against his interpretations.

Yet, with rare exceptions, American scholars remained silent. Some dismissed Said's caricature as unserious, while others were cowed by the impossibility of disproving false charges of racism. Most important, Said's attack came at a time when the rise of religious reaction and social chaos in the Middle East had undermined the confidence of Middle East scholars.

The effects of *Orientalism* on the field were profound. It not only made the avowal of a scholar's political principles appropriate, even necessary; Said's work, in Kramer's words, "enshrined an acceptable hierarchy of political commitments, with Palestine at the top, followed by the Arab nations and the Islamic world." As UCLA historian Nikki Keddie put it, "orientalism" became a sort of swear word with which to dismiss the work of anyone who took the "wrong" position on the Arab-Israeli conflict or whose views were judged conservative.

But that was the least of it. The most pernicious effect of Said's book was presumptively to impeach as racist the scholarship of anyone not born in the East. *Orientalism* was turned into a manifesto for affirmative action for Arab and Muslim scholars, who, despite their predominantly upper-class origins, could gain admittance to the academy's racial spoils system once they were cast as victims of racist, colonialist oppression.

From the earliest days, immigrant scholars had played a role in the field, without enjoying any sort of preference. In 1971, Kramer reports,


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3.2 percent of America's Middle East area specialists had been born in the region. By 1992, the figure was nearly half. This demographic transformation consolidated the conversion of Middle Eastern studies to leftist anti-Americanism.

Now in control of America's bastions of Middle Eastern studies, the Saidians (whose luminaries included University of Chicago historian Rashid Khalidi and MIT historian Philip Khoury) were nevertheless no better placed than the modernizers had been to make sense of developments in the region. This is because, at a time when the influence of Islamic fundamentalism was growing, Said's scheme stigmatized scholarly discussion of Islam as intrinsically "essentializing" and bigoted. Said himself was hostile to religion, a secular leftist with little knowledge of Islam.

Said's postmodern inflection of Marxism had no more place for Islam than did the leftism of the well-heeled secular immigrants who embraced the postcolonial paradigm. Instead of a fundamentalist revival, Said's followers awaited a progressive revolution. They took the chaos in Beirut, the advent of Khomeini, and other signs of transformation in the region as evidence of an emerging revolt of the dispossessed. A new order would arise in the Middle East, they thought, and it would be one that empowered women, students, intellectuals, and refugees. Under these circumstances, Kramer writes, "the duty of the sympathetic scholar was to study these forces, prove their potential on a theoretical level, and support them as a practical matter. As the progressive forces seized the initiative in Middle Eastern capitals, their allies would do the same on American campuses."

But no progressive revolution materialized in the Middle East. Khomeini ruthlessly purged the secular left, fundamentalism spread, and even "modern" women in many places began to don the veil. Having stigmatized any attention to the religious or cultural character of Islam as an orientalist thought crime, the postcolonialists were left without a way to address these developments.

Into the breach stepped John Esposito, a professor of Islamic studies at Holy Cross College who, in books like *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (1992) and (with John O. Voll) *Islam and Democracy* (1996), popularized Said's ideas by purging them of their overt leftism and anti-Americanism and ingeniously applying them to Islam.

Scholars faced the challenge of explaining the seeming exceptionalism of Islam—its resistance to modernization and democratization—at a time when belief in Islamic exceptionalism had been identified as neo-colonial bigotry. Esposito's solution was to announce that Islamic fundamentalism had been a movement of democratic reform all along, and only orientalist prejudice had prevented Westerners from seeing this happy truth. Americans would need to transcend their ethnocentric notions of democracy in order to understand that fundamentalist Islamic movements might forge "effective systems of popular participation" in ways unknown to the West.

*Throughout the 1990s, American academics simply refused to study Islamic terrorism. Instead, they searched in vain for a Muslim "Martin Luther."*

His reputation growing, Esposito was elected president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America in 1988, and in 1993 took the helm of Georgetown University's new Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. He and his followers disparaged public concern about terrorism as barely disguised anti-Muslim prejudice. Thus, after the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, Columbia historian Richard Bulliet organized a conference not to grapple with the emergence of terrorism in New York, but to attack the wave of anti-Muslim prejudice that supposedly would be set off by a guilty verdict in the bombers' trials.

Throughout the 1990s, American academics simply refused to study Islamic terrorism. Instead, they searched in vain for a Muslim "Martin Luther," some thinker who might reinterpret the Islamic tradition so as to adapt it to democracy. Osama bin Laden could only be an embarrassment to scholars who saw political Islam as benign. To this day, American scholars have produced not a single serious study of bin Laden, his ideology, or his influence. Six months before September 11, Sarah Lawrence professor Fawaz Gerges, whose work drew on Esposito's paradigm, asked: "Should not observers and academics keep skeptical about the U.S. government's assessment of the terrorist threat? To what extent do terrorist 'experts' indirectly perpetuate this irrational fear of terrorism by focusing too much on far-fetched horrible scenarios?"

The Clinton State Department actually made John Esposito a foreign affairs analyst in its intelligence bureau. Edward Said, meanwhile, was approvingly recycling the argument of Esposito's book *The Islamic Threat*—that the fear of terrorism is the latest mutation of Cold War paranoia. An influential article of Said's appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* on November 21, 1993, under a title that, in retrospect, nicely encapsulates the worthlessness of his prognostications: "The Phony Islamic Threat."

The decline of Middle Eastern studies is a sobering story of intellectual failure—of the persistent inability of scholars to predict or explain real-world developments in the region of their supposed expertise. Martin Kramer has performed a crucial service by exposing the intellectual rot in a scholarly field of capital importance to our national well-being. ♦



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# The Enemy of Our Enemy . . .

## Is still not our friend, at least in the case of Iran.

**BY A. WILLIAM SAMII**

THE CONFLICT to its east has presented Iran with a dilemma: whether and how to get involved in the war on terrorism. The Tehran government does not want to be seen as aiding Washington in its attack against a Muslim state, since anti-Americanism is one of the regime's founding myths, and to suddenly and publicly reverse course could undermine its legitimacy. Simply to sit on the sidelines, however, could leave Tehran with no voice in shaping a post-Taliban Afghanistan. Besides, Taliban-controlled Afghanistan has been a mischievous neighbor, and Iranians regard the Taliban itself—in the words of their supreme religious leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—as an embarrassment to Islam.

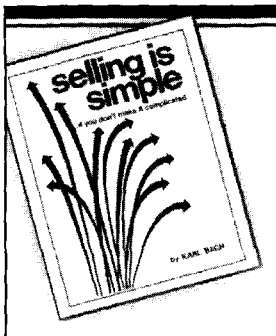
The backdrop against which Iran's leaders must confront their choices is fraught with contradictions. Officially, Iran and the United States have no diplomatic relations and haven't for 22 years; yet contacts as high as the foreign minister level exist and are increasing. In its public rhetoric, the regime demonizes the United States, yet many high-placed Iranians see a need for rapprochement.

In recent years, a variety of regional issues have occasioned contacts between U.S. and Iranian officials. Some of these are not acknowledged; Europe's Arabic-language press, for example, occasionally reports clandestine meetings between American and Iranian officials to discuss Iraq and the different Iraqi opposition groups the two governments support. Other contacts are matters of public record. The State Department, for instance, has called for greater Iranian involvement in settling the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-occupied enclave in Azerbaijan.

More to the point, Iran and the United States are both members of the "6 + 2 group," made up of Afghanistan's immediate neighbors, plus the United States and Russia. Under the auspices of this group, Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi is, at this writing, due to meet with Secretary of State Colin Powell in New York on November 12, as he met with Powell's predecessor, Madeleine Albright, in September 2000. Moreover, Iran's representative at the U.N., Hadi Nejad-Hosseinian, dined with members of Congress in Washington in mid October. He and other Iranian officials are often granted permission to travel in the United States—in March he spoke at the University of Montana, and Iranian officials have begun participating in senior executive seminars at Harvard University. (American diplomats, by contrast, cannot so much as set foot in Tehran, let alone travel outside the Iranian capital.)

Yet even as these meetings take place, Tehran continues its anti-American patter. Less than two weeks ago, Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's most powerful official, delivered several anti-American speeches. In one, he called negotiations with the United

*A. William Samii is a regional analyst at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.*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States "against our national interest today." At Isfahan University on November 3, he told students not to give in to the plots of "world arrogance" and asked, "Should we make peace with the enemy?"

The chant "Death to America," which was dropped from public rallies and prayer services for the two weeks immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States, is back as a regular feature of services across the country. And the government created a website and staged a series of public rallies on November 4 to commemorate the seizure of the U.S. embassy in 1979. The former embassy, once a military training facility, is now a museum of America's supposed crimes.

More and more Iranians recognize that this sort of behavior is not very productive. Some of the same people who 22 years ago were responsible for the hostage crisis now have expressed their sympathy to the victims of terrorism in the United States. And in a backhanded criticism of political hardliners, some have condemned "religious fundamentalism and Taliban-like Islam." One member of parliament, Behzad Nabavi, said that, while seizing the embassy had been beneficial and had protected the Islamic revolution from a possible U.S.-directed coup, times have changed, and normalized ties with the United States are now in order. Another member of parliament, Yadollah Eslami, wrote in the Tehran daily *Noruz* on November 6, "The question of talks and ties with America must not turn into a taboo."

Other Iranian political figures say the time has come for Tehran to interact officially with Washington. At the end of October, member of parliament Gholam Heidar Ebrahim-Bay-Salami said a special Afghan crisis committee had concluded that talks with the United States were in the national interest. Another member of parliament, Meisam Saidi, said Iran has neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, and it is time to review the country's policies.

This alarms Iran's leaders, especially when such views are expressed in public by members of the political elite. The hardline judiciary chief, Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi, threatened to take legal action against people who failed to behave in accordance with the official stance on relations with the United States. And in late October, Tehran started jamming shortwave broadcasts by the Persian Services of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America. This is not the first instance of jamming, but it came on the heels of two weeks of intermittent rioting in at least five major cities, in which Iranians of all ages chanted anti-regime slogans and in some cases demanded the return of the monarchy. As a further precaution, the regime is confiscating the illegal satellite receiver dishes by which Iranians receive Persian-language broadcasts from private U.S. stations.

Meanwhile, Tehran takes a dim view of U.S. military action in Afghanistan. Before the airstrikes started, Khamenei told a crowd, "We shall not offer any assistance to America and its allies in their attack on Afghanistan." As the crowd chanted "Death to America," Khamenei asked how the United States could seek Iranian assistance in Afghanistan when Americans "are the ones who have always inflicted blows on Iran's interests." And just after the airstrikes began, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "These attacks—which have been launched regardless of the world public opinion, especially the Muslim nations, and will damage the innocent and oppressed Afghans—are unacceptable."

President Hojatoleslam Mohammad Khatami was equally unequivocal in public statements. On October 11 he called America and the Taliban "two sides of the same coin." He explained that Washington's stance—any country that does not join the anti-terrorism coalition supports terrorism—and the Taliban's stance—attacks against the Taliban are attacks against Islam—both exemplify the "false and arrogant judgments" that are the root causes of "violence and terror."

This is not to say that Tehran has any fondness for the Taliban, who have massacred members of Afghanistan's Hazara minority, most of whom practice the Shiite Islam that is Iran's state religion. Moreover, the Taliban killed eight Iranian diplomats in August 1998, the narcotics the Taliban smuggle contribute to the soaring addiction rate in Iran, and the refugee flows they cause swell Iran's estimated 25 percent unemployment.

These could be among the reasons why, shortly before the air war started, members of the Khatami administration met with Western diplomats in Tehran and urged them to finish the job and eliminate the Taliban. Tehran also responded favorably to a White House request on October 7 to aid any U.S. military personnel who either are forced to land in Iran or whose survival, evasion, resistance, or escape activities takes them there.

In theory, the new circumstances created by September 11 should have given the Iranians a chance to loosen the constraints on their relationship with the United States—most of which constraints are of Tehran's making. President Khatami made a favorable impression when he condemned the suicide attacks the day they occurred and conveyed "deep regret and condolences to the American nation." Tehran could build on this.

The White House has repeatedly offered to hold a dialogue with Tehran, while noting that there are issues it would like to discuss—Iran's support for terrorism, its violent opposition to the Middle East peace process, and its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. But in the past, Iran's leaders have refused to engage in such a dialogue and instead have made demands and set preconditions for talks. Today, the unsettled and hostile political environment in Tehran seems to leave Khatami little room to make a positive gesture toward Washington, even in the unlikely event he wanted to. Despite the turmoil produced by September 11, the possibility of a more productive U.S.-Iranian relationship remains up in the air. ♦



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# Saying No to Assisted Suicide

## The attorney general takes on Oregon.

**BY WESLEY J. SMITH**

WHEN OREGON VOTERS legalized assisted suicide in 1994, state regulators had a problem. They wanted to authorize doctors to prescribe barbiturates as killing agents. But the federal government regulates the use of these drugs under the Controlled Substances Act, and federal law did not permit their use to intentionally kill.

Ordinarily, that would have been that. The feds, not the states, have the final say about what would and would not be a proper use of drugs governed by the Controlled Substances Act. Unfortunately, Oregon's assisted suicide law went into effect during the Clinton years, when principle and the rule of law were rarely allowed to impede political expedience. Thus, it was hardly surprising when former Attorney General Janet Reno declared that she would not enforce federal law against Oregon's doctors who assisted patient suicides, thereby permitting a state to nullify the federal proscription against using controlled substances to kill.

Proponents of assisted suicide were thrilled. Their Oregon beachhead secure, they expected to spread their dark agenda nationwide. Instead, they have been turned back by a potent alliance of liberal disability rights activists, conservative pro-lifers, members of the hospice movement, medical professionals, and advocates for the poor and minorities. Only seven years after the Oregon law passed, the landscape has dramatically changed: Jack Kevorkian is in prison for murder; initiatives attempting to legalize assisted suicide failed in Michigan in 1998 by 71-29 percent and in Maine last year by 51-49 percent; and the U.S. Supreme Court, followed by Florida and Alaska high courts, all ruled that there is no constitutional right to assisted suicide.

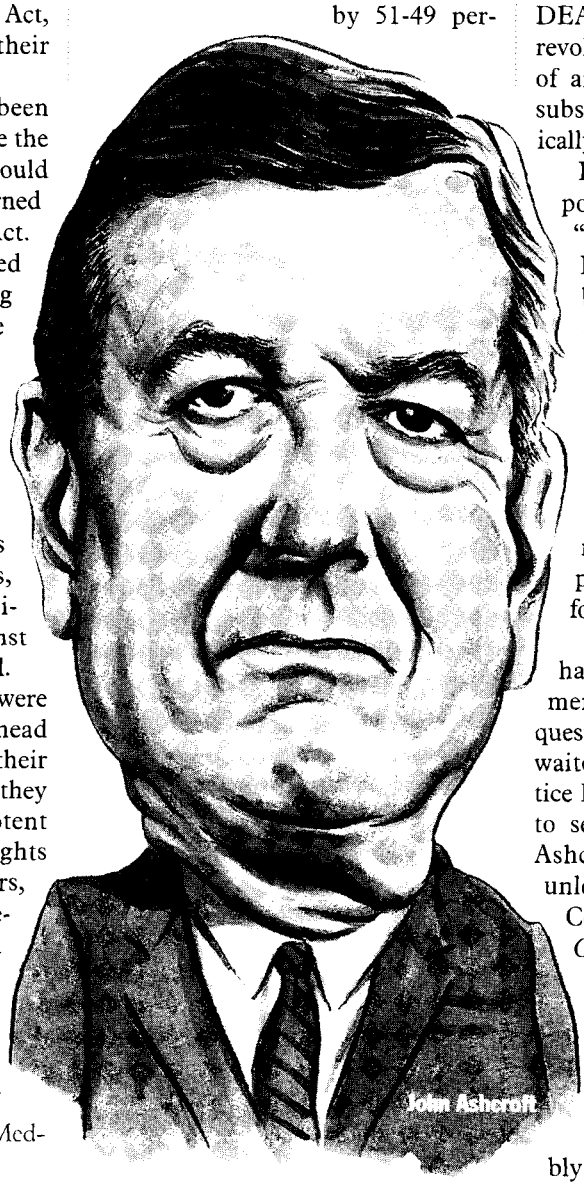


Illustration by Drew Friedman

*Wesley J. Smith, an attorney for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, is the author of* Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America.

And now, assisted suicide in Oregon has taken a body blow. Last Wednesday, Attorney General John Ashcroft issued a memorandum to Asa Hutchinson, the new head of the DEA, reversing Reno's decision. Oregon regulations will no longer override the Controlled Substances Act. "Assisting suicide is not a 'legitimate medical purpose'" under the meaning of that act, Ashcroft stated, and doctors who assist suicides act "inconsistently with the public interest." Accordingly, even though assisted suicide remains legal in Oregon, the DEA will now be authorized to revoke the federal prescribing license of any doctor who uses controlled substances lethally rather than medically.

Predictably, Oregon has sued, its politicians bellowing that their "state's rights" have been violated. But this is nonsense. Ashcroft based his decision on the recent 8-0 Supreme Court decision in *United States* v. *Oakland Cannabis Buyers' Cooperative*, which ruled that while California was free to legalize medical marijuana all it wanted, the state's decision did not prevent the federal government from enforcing federal law proscribing the use of marijuana for any purpose.

Not surprisingly, a federal judge has temporarily restrained implementation of Ashcroft's decision, questioning why the attorney general waited months before changing Justice Department policy. But it is hard to see how any court can prevent Ashcroft from enforcing federal law unless it openly flouts the Supreme Court ruling in *Cannabis Buyer's Club*.

Of course, this is the Ninth Circuit, the most reversed court in the country, so the road is likely to be bumpy. But the Supreme Court sits at the end of that road, and thus, it is probably only a matter of time before the



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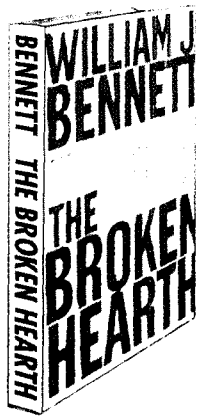


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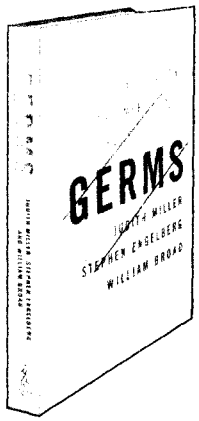


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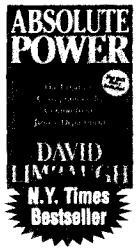


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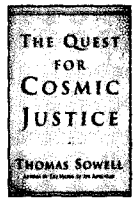


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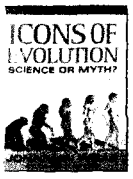

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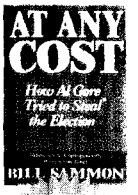

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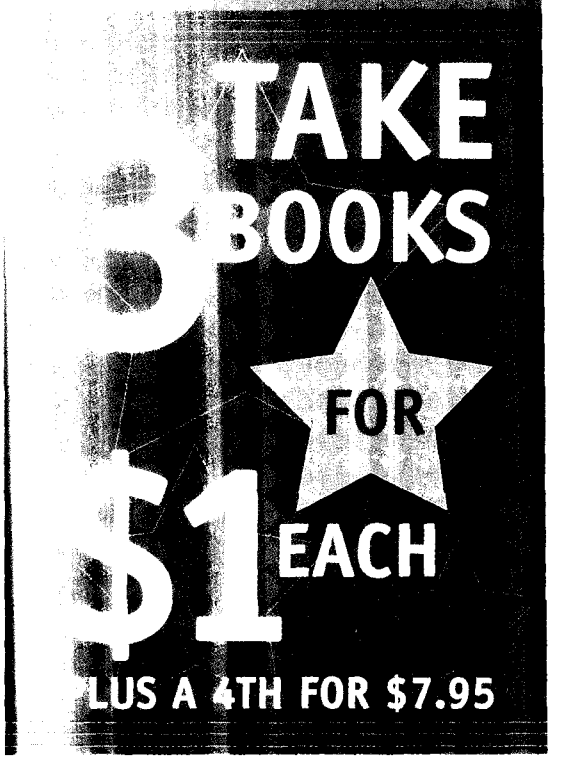


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Controlled Substances Act is enforced uniformly in all 50 states.

Oregon euthanasia activists warn that Ashcroft's memo will create a "chilling effect" for doctors who wish to aggressively treat pain. But this is baseless fear-mongering. Ashcroft has already written to the president of the Oregon Medical Association assuring him that Oregon doctors "have no reason to fear" that prescribing "controlled substances to control pain will lead to increased scrutiny by the DEA, even when high doses of painkilling drugs are necessary." Moreover, states that have outlawed assisted suicide, while at the same time making it clear that aggressive treatment of pain is a proper medical act, have seen tremendous per capita increases in the prescription of morphine to treat pain. For example, in 1996 Rhode Island outlawed assisted suicide. Since then, per capita morphine use has increased 164 percent. Michigan's similar ban resulted in increased morphine use of 20 percent since 1998. Similarly, Louisiana banned assisted suicide in 1995 and has seen a 26 percent increase in per capita morphine use.

Any lingering worries about chilling effects could be easily thawed by passing the Pain Relief Promotion Act, legislation that would explicitly make aggressive pain control a legitimate medical purpose under the Controlled Substances Act. Unfortunately, passage of this important bill was thwarted last year by Senator Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat who feared the pain relief legislation would do what Ashcroft has just done—reassert a federal penalty for doctors who use controlled substances to engage in assisted suicide. Wyden saw to it that the legislative clock ran out on the pain relief act.

Now that Ashcroft has properly restored federal standards in the use of controlled substances, there is no further excuse to thwart passage of the Pain Relief Promotion Act. If Wyden and the other backers of Oregon's assisted suicide regime really care about suffering patients, this time they won't stand in the way. ♦

# Ariel Sharon, Closet Dove?

## His unity government muddles through, less hardline than advertised. BY TOM ROSE

*Jerusalem*

NO ONE INSIDE ISRAEL wonders why Prime Minister Ariel Sharon abruptly cancelled a trip to Washington long scheduled for November 11-13. Everyone here knows that Sharon, at the urging of advisers and allies, cancelled the trip to avoid facing an American president unhappy about Israel's continued presence in Palestinian towns and likely to demand new Israeli concessions to Yasser Arafat. It wasn't fear of offending the president that worried Sharon's team, nor were they afraid the volatile former general might blow a gasket on American television. They dreaded the opposite. Those who know Sharon's history best worried not that he would reject U.S. demands—but that he would likely capitulate to them.

Sharon has been a national figure in Israel since his daring anti-terror raids of the 1950s. In 1973, his military exploits in the Yom Kippur War made him a national hero. But in less than a decade, he went from hero to goat when, as defense minister in 1982, he launched Israel's ill-fated invasion of Lebanon to end PLO terrorist infiltration into northern Israel.

A massacre at the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila by Lebanese Christian militias allied with Israel forced Sharon to resign. An Israeli commission of inquiry ruled that by not anticipating the massacre, Sharon had incurred indirect responsibility for it. Many who know him say that cleansing himself of that stain has been his abiding obsession ever since.

He's pursued it against heavy odds. The world made up its mind about Sharon a long time ago. The American media, undoubtedly the least hostile, regularly label him "right wing" or "hard-line." The official Arab press prefers "butcher" or "murderer." Meanwhile, a Belgian court is pursuing a case that could lead to his indictment on war crimes charges for his "role" in the events at Sabra and Shatila.

Although Sharon was elected prime minister in February 2001 in a historic landslide, few interpreted the win as a personal victory. In fact, Sharon was able to secure his conservative Likud party's nomination only because former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu chose not to seek it. Israelis were so desperate to end the disastrous tenure of Prime Minister Ehud Barak that they dealt him one of the most resounding defeats of any modern democratic head of government, sweeping into office in his place the controversial and unpopular Sharon. But because Israel's parliament, the Knesset, had not been dissolved, Sharon was forced to cobble together a government from politicians elected on Barak's coattails.

Sharon assembled the largest government in Israel's history. Seventy-seven of the 120 Knesset members are part of the governing coalition, which includes parties from the far left to the far right. At the core are Sharon's Likud and the left-wing Labor party, formally leaderless but actually headed by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Sharon has been the

*Tom Rose is publisher of the* Jerusalem Post.



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most persistent critic of the Oslo peace process since it started in 1993. Peres created Oslo and remains its most ardent advocate. Today nearly everyone in Israel views as a failure the attempt to appease Arafat by giving him dictatorial power over three million Palestinians and a 70,000-man army with which to suppress them and attack Israelis.

Even so, it enhances Peres's power that he is the only member of the government still publicly committed to Oslo. This is because a national unity government is thought to be a crucial strategic asset in the nation's struggle for international approval and support. It has also muted internecine political warfare and helped unite a fractious people. And it has been very good to Ariel Sharon. The unity government is essential to Sharon's political survival, and keeping the Labor party inside the government has become Sharon's abiding preoccupation.

If the government fell, the country would hold new elections, and Sharon's political career would end with his defeat in a nominating primary. As Sharon knows, Likud party regulars are clamoring to dump him in favor of the charismatic Netanyahu, who leads Sharon in party polls by about two to one. Sharon is so fixated on preventing Netanyahu's return that his critics charge he is willing to pay almost any price to keep Peres in power. The price Peres appears to have demanded is Sharon's agreement to resurrect Arafat and revive Oslo.

But if Sharon has indeed capitulated to demands for more negotiations with, or concessions to, Arafat, that is nothing new. On the contrary, it is typical. And every time Sharon has demanded anything of Peres or Arafat, he has quickly backed down.

Upon assuming office, Sharon "demanded" a six-week period of "absolute quiet" (free of violence) before he would authorize formal contact with Arafat. When Sharon last "demanded" a period of "absolute quiet," it had shrunk to 48 hours—and less than 24 hours later, he had backed away from that. Just two weeks ago, Sharon promised family members of assassinated cabinet member Rehavam Zeevi that no one from his government would ever meet with Arafat again. The same evening, plans were leaked for the next Peres-Arafat meeting.

Ariel Sharon

AFP Photo

Arafat has used Sharon's indecision and reversals deftly, to maneuver his way right back to center stage. And so, just when it seemed Arafat was about to be consigned to history's dustbin, the man who introduced the world to modern terrorism has once again been given new life by an Israeli leader. But this time, it was not a left-wing Israeli who threw Arafat a lifeline, but rather the most potent embodiment of the Israeli right. The man who had worked hardest to destroy Arafat is the very one responsible for granting him renewed legitimacy.

Still, most Israelis are unwilling to dump Sharon and his unity government. Israelis are accustomed to mediocre if not dysfunctional government, but they also know that they can change their leaders whenever they want—they've already done it four times in the last five years. Sharon's public incoherence notwithstanding, Israelis seem willing to accept as a blessing his inability to chart a new course. His listlessness, both diplomatic and military, seems to have postponed, if not prevented, the wider war many fear. At the same time, he has allowed his security services to execute an impressive anti-terrorist campaign throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

Following the assassination of Rehavam Zeevi by an Arafat-affiliated terrorist organization on October 17, Sharon, facing massive public pressure, authorized the Israel Defense Forces to enter Palestinian-controlled territory to destroy terrorist redoubts and detain wanted militants. In two weeks, the IDF killed nearly two dozen terrorists, arrested more than 80, and destroyed up to a dozen terrorist cells. For the first time in more than a year, it finally looked like Israel had seized some momentum.

So Sharon hangs on, buying survival by the day, rather than planning for the future. If he has a strategy, he has arrived at it by default: Call it the "strategy of postponement." For now, it seems to most Israelis the least bad of the available alternatives. ♦



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# Saddam Hussein's American Apologist

*The strange career of former U.N. arms inspector Scott Ritter*

**By Stephen F. Hayes**

"Iraq today represents a threat to no one."

It's hard to imagine that argument coming these days from anyone other than Tariq Aziz, or another of Saddam Hussein's propagandists. But those are in fact the words of Scott Ritter, former chief U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq. This represents an astonishing conversion. Ritter, after all, abruptly quit that job in frustration three years ago, complaining of Iraqi obstructionism and U.S. acquiescence. At the time, he had quite a different view of Baghdad: "Iraq presents a clear and present danger to international peace and security."

But Ritter has lately been hawking his Iraq-as-a-lamb theory to everyone who will listen—from his perch as a Fox News analyst, in regular appearances on NPR, to reporters at newspapers across the country. When his former U.N. supervisor, Ambassador Richard Butler, suggested that Iraq might be responsible for the spate of anthrax attacks in the United States, Ritter told a *Boston Globe* reporter that such speculation is "irresponsible." Asked on Chris Matthews's *Hardball* whether Saddam Hussein has anthrax, he equivocated: "Well, there's—you know, we, as weapons inspectors for United Nations, destroyed Iraq's biological weapons program. There's a lot of things that are unaccounted for such as growth media, which allows them to—to grow these germs. But the basic factories, the fermentation units, etc., had been destroyed. So, you know, the—the chance of Iraq having something like this is—is slim to none. We won't ever know until we get weapons inspectors back in. But Iraq's not on the top of my list in terms of, you know, places we should be worried about."

*By Ritter's own admission, the financial backer of his documentary is "openly sympathetic with the regime in Baghdad."*

*Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at* The Weekly Standard.

Obviously, Ritter's views on Iraq have changed over the past three years. Indeed, they've basically flipped. Then, Iraqi leaders were inveterate liars; today, they are victims of American "propaganda mills." Then, Saddam Hussein was hell-bent on building his deadly arsenal; today, he wants to feed Iraqi children. Then, the key to Iraq's future was overthrowing Saddam Hussein; today, Hussein is a "viable dictator."

The Scott Ritter of 1998 would have some fierce debates with the Scott Ritter of 2001. But the Scott Ritter of 2001 doesn't even admit to having changed his mind. "That's a common criticism," he says, but "I just ask people to take the time to review the record. When I first resigned, which was in August of 1998, I spoke out—and I said this to the Senate—that I'm speaking out as an inspector, even though I'm not an inspector. And what that means is, I'm speaking out in defense of the resolution, 687, that the Security Council passed that the United States endorsed. And this called for 100 percent disarmament, and we have less than that."

So does Ritter believe, as he wrote October 12 in the *Los Angeles Times*, that Iraq really "represents a threat to no one"?

"From a conventional standpoint, I'd say that Iraq represents virtually a zero-sum threat," he insists. On weapons of mass destruction, Ritter hedges a bit. "I'll always maintain that we never got 100 percent of the weapons, but I will maintain—and the facts speak for themselves—that we got 90-95 percent of it," he says. "In the past three years, we just don't know what's been going on. And that should be put on the table right off the bat. But what we do know is that using 1998 as a benchmark, Iraq, frankly speaking, hasn't had the time or the resources to effectively reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction program."

Among the former arms inspectors, Ritter is unique in



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his benign views of the Iraqi threat. Butler has referred to this as "Ritter's crap." Iraqi leaders, needless to say, are thrilled with what the *Washington Post*'s Colum Lynch called Ritter's "bizarre turnaround." They now "seem to view their erstwhile enemy as an asset in the propaganda war against the United States." But don't take the *Post*'s word for it. On Iraq's official website—*www.uruklink.net*—after a few words of token criticism of the former weapons inspector, there is a tribute to Ritter, in a rather fractured translation from the original Arabic.

"The admittance of Scott Ritter and his enthusiastic in calling for the lifting of the unfair embargo and to halt the continuous bleeding of Iraqi people is a conscience scream." Then there is an appeal to other former U.N. inspectors to follow in his footsteps. "The truth veiled by the American poisoned propaganda . . . sooner or later the truth will shine. . . . He who will not participate in revealing the truth and support Iraq will regret in the future. He who says the truth, as Scott Ritter did, will be happy, conscientious, and proud to be one of the honest people who participated in revealing the truth. Those who will be so, we will admire and greet."

The part about admiring and greeting is literal. Ritter was welcomed back to Baghdad in July 2000, with the blessing of Saddam Hussein. The reason for his trip? To produce a documentary film, *In Shifting Sands*, that would chronicle the weapons-inspection process and, he says, "de-demonize" Iraq. The 90-minute film, which he says he is close to selling to a broadcast outlet, was produced with the approval of the Iraqi government and features interviews with numerous high-level Iraqi officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

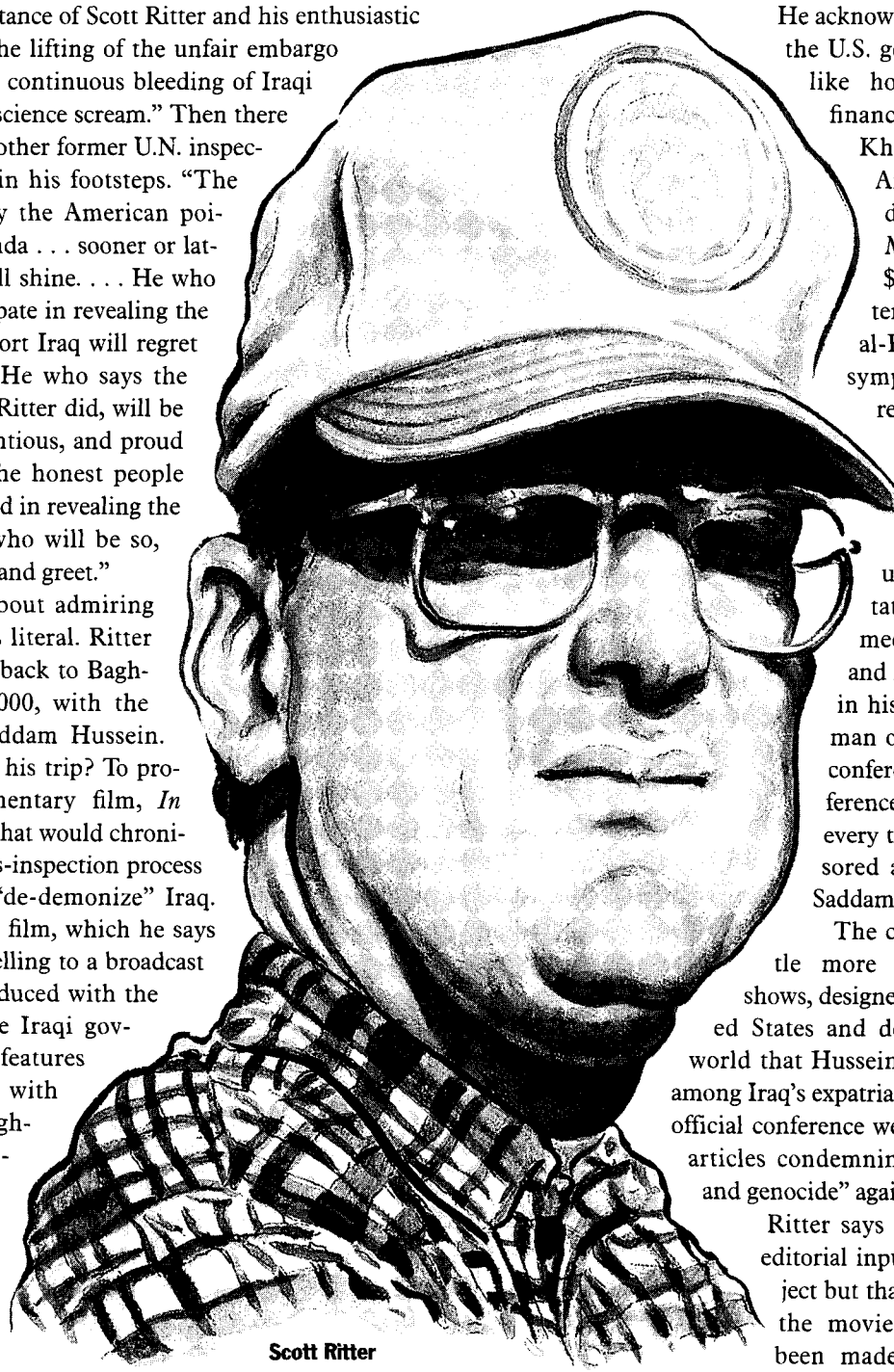
U.S. intelligence officials and arms control advocates say Ritter has been played—perhaps unwittingly—by Saddam Hussein. "If you're Scott Ritter," says one arms expert, "the former 'cowboy' weapons inspector, kicked out by Saddam Hussein, you're not going to get back into Iraq unless Saddam Hussein invites you and wants you there."

Ritter doesn't entirely disagree. Though he claims the film is an attempt to be "objective" about the situation in Iraq, he predicted before its completion, "the U.S. will definitely not like this film."

He acknowledges, as well, that the U.S. government doesn't like how the film was financed. Shakir al-Khafaji, an Iraqi-American real estate developer living in Michigan, kicked in $400,000. By Ritter's own admission, al-Khafaji is "openly sympathetic with the regime in Baghdad." Al-Khafaji, who accompanied Ritter as he filmed the documentary and facilitated many of the meetings, travels to and from Iraq regularly in his capacity as chairman of "Iraqi expatriate conferences." Those conferences, held in Baghdad every two years, are sponsored and subsidized by Saddam Hussein.

The conferences are little more than propaganda shows, designed to bash the United States and demonstrate to the world that Hussein has support even among Iraq's expatriate community. The official conference website posts several articles condemning U.S. "terrorism and genocide" against Iraq.

Ritter says al-Khafaji had no editorial input on the film project but that without his help, the movie would not have been made. "I tried to get



Scott Ritter

Illustration by Drew Friedman



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independent sources to fund the movie," he says. "People can talk about the funding all they want. If I'd been able to be bought—from '95 to '98 the CIA paid me. Did I do their bidding?"

Ritter says the FBI investigated the relationship between him and al-Khafaji and found nothing. "They surrounded my house, they stopped me on the street," he says. "Nothing."

How did the man who was arguably Public Enemy No. 1 of Saddam Hussein's Iraq end up three years later as perhaps the leading American apologist for Iraq? Ask the average American about Scott Ritter, and those who don't confuse him with the clumsy guy on *Three's Company* will probably still tell you he's an American hero.

Ritter was the ex-Marine tough guy who very publicly resigned his position as chief U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq in late August 1998. Since the end of the Gulf War, he had been part of the team enforcing the cease-fire agreement that prohibited Iraq from developing weapons of mass destruction, the equipment to make such weapons, and the vehicles (missiles) to deliver them. By the mid '90s, the inspection process had deteriorated into a potentially lethal game of hide-and-seek. Ritter, as he put it, was "the alpha dog," a badass inspector there to show the deceitful Iraqis who was in charge.

Except for the occasional armed confrontation, the routine was predictable. Iraqi leaders would insist that they were fully disarmed, and shortly thereafter U.N. inspectors would happen upon, say, a stash of VX nerve agent or perhaps some shells containing mustard gas, 97 percent pure. When the inspectors showed up at potential weapons sites, the Iraqis often simply refused to give them access.

"The fact of the matter is that since April 1991, under the direct orders and direction of the president of Iraq, the government of Iraq has lied to the Special Commission about the totality of its holdings," Ritter later testified.

Ritter became frustrated and demanded a more aggressive inspection process. "He used to write me the most strident memos about their refusal to let us do our jobs," says Richard Butler, former head of the U.N. inspection team and Ritter's boss. "I remember him banging his fist on the table—telling me to let him go in."

But as Ritter grew more determined to force inspections, the Clinton administration grew wobbly. "We have been directly told, 'Do not do these inspections,'" Ritter recalled shortly after resigning. "And since April [1998] we have not been allowed to do these tasks, largely because of pressure placed upon the Special Commission by administration officials."

A week after his resignation, following a whirlwind of debriefings and interviews, Ritter was invited to testify at a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees on September 3, 1998. Strom Thurmond, the South Carolina Republican, introduced Ritter as "a tough and demanding inspector" and a "dedicated American."

Ritter wasted no time in offering his assessment of the continuing threat: "Iraq has not been disarmed." The United States, he claimed, had deliberately thwarted the U.N. inspections for fear of a confrontation with Iraq. He ripped the administration for its refusal to back up the inspections process with a legitimate use of force, including, but not limited to, removing Saddam Hussein's regime.

Ritter was such a hawk and so critical of the Clinton administration's non-confrontational approach that he drew the ire of Senator Joe Biden. "They have responsibilities above your pay grade—slightly above your pay grade—to decide whether or not to take the nation to war alone or to take the nation to war part-way, or to take the nation to war half-way," the Delaware Democrat scolded. "That's a real tough decision. That's why they get paid the big bucks. That's why they get the limos and you don't."

But the hearing's most sober moment came just minutes later, when Sam Brownback, Republican from Kansas, asked Ritter for his opinion about the continuation of the Iraqi weapons-of-mass-destruction program. "Once effective inspection regimes have been terminated," said Ritter, "Iraq will be able to reconstitute the entirety of its former nuclear, chemical, and ballistic missile delivery system capabilities within a period of six months."

All inspections stopped in December 1998. That same month, in an article written for the *New Republic*, Ritter again warned of the continuing Iraqi threat, this time in much greater detail. "Even today, Iraq is not nearly disarmed," he maintained. "Based on highly credible intelligence, UNSCOM [the U.N. weapons inspectors] suspects that Iraq still has biological agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, and clostridium perfringens in sufficient quantity to fill several dozen bombs and ballistic missile warheads, as well as the means to continue manufacturing these deadly agents. Iraq probably retains several tons of the highly toxic VX substance, as well as sarin nerve gas and mustard gas. This agent is stored in artillery shells, bombs, and ballistic missile warheads. And Iraq retains significant dual-use industrial infrastructure that can be used to rapidly reconstitute large-scale chemical weapons production."

Saddam Hussein had successfully faced down the



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United Nations and the United States, and if Scott Ritter was right, that was big trouble.

So it was, and is. But Ritter now utterly contradicts his testimony of 1998, according to which Saddam Hussein could have reconstituted a fearsome arsenal of weapons of mass destruction by the middle of 1999. By that time, in a June 1999 interview with leaders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a peace organization based in Nyack, New York, he had changed his tune. "When you ask the question [does] Iraq possess militarily viable biological or chemical weapons? The answer is 'no.' It is a resounding *NO*! Can Iraq produce today chemical weapons on a meaningful scale? No! Can Iraq produce biological weapons on a meaningful scale? No! Ballistic missiles? No. It is 'no' across the board. So from a qualitative standpoint, Iraq has been disarmed. Iraq today possesses no meaningful weapons of mass destruction capability."

Virtually every expert on Iraq and arms control disagrees. Ambassador Butler, Ritter's former boss with the U.N., says that Iraq never disarmed during the 1990s and almost certainly has weapons of mass destruction today. Charles Duelfer, Butler's number two, believes Iraq currently has biological and chemical weapons, and the means to deliver them. Arms control experts Gary Milhollin and Kelly Motz, with the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, detailed in the July issue of *Commentary* the steady and stealthy weapons trade with Iraq.

*Ritter worried about "propaganda mills in America" that "demonized Saddam in the most extreme fashion."*

Butler, for one, is nonplussed when asked about Ritter's change. "In a day filled with lots of phone calls, interviews, etcetera it's almost a waste of time to comment on that," he says. "I don't want to sound arrogant, it's simply ridiculous." Pushed, though, he offers this assessment: "I'll say this about Scott, either he's misleading the public now, or he misled me then."

Duelfer, too, rejects Ritter's all-clear declarations on Iraq. "Why would [Saddam] have given up his intent to develop these weapons? He's made credible arguments that these weapons have saved them in the past, in the war against Iran, in the Gulf War," says Duelfer. "Why would Saddam say, 'This saved my ass one time,' and then say, 'Oh yeah, you're right. This isn't moral. I'll stop.'"

"Maybe Scott's got some very narrow definition of 'threat.' I just don't see it."

Ritter is dismissive of his former supervisors. "Those critics?" he says. "Screw 'em."

In his less guarded moments, though, Ritter appears to acknowledge that Iraq retains weapons of mass destruction. Just minutes after he told the Fellowship of Reconciliation that Iraq has "no meaningful weapons of mass destruction capability," he qualified that assertion. More than that, he offered a justification for Saddam Hussein to repudiate the agreement that ended the Gulf War and rearm Iraq.

Iraqi leaders, he said, "see their neighbors' weapons of mass destruction, they see the inevitability of conflict with the United States, and they're not going to give up their weapons. When Madeleine Albright made that awful statement in March of 1997, that economic sanctions would continue while Saddam was in power regardless of weapons disarmament, she basically closed the door on any hope that the Iraqis would get rid of their weapons."

Ritter says he doesn't want to whitewash Saddam, but that Iraq's "mistakes" are no different from those of the United States. "We are the United States, and I'm not trying to give Saddam Hussein the moral equivalency that the United States has, but I believe that it's disingenuous to acknowledge that we are capable of making mistakes, and on the other hand interpreting everything the Iraqis do as having nefarious intent. This is a nation that has been devastated by a war, bombed to hell and back, and then it has these brutal economic sanctions which leave the country in disarray. There will be mistakes."

Earlier this year, Ritter worried in the *Harvard International Review* about pre-Gulf War "propaganda mills in America" that "demonized Saddam in the most extreme fashion in preparation for war." Saddam Hussein, he argued in a recent interview, is simply misunderstood. "We try to apply our own perceptions of morality and ideology to an environment that we just do not understand." He pushed the same line at an appearance last month at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock.

"When I say Saddam Hussein, you say 'evil,'" Ritter rebuked his audience. "I say 50,000 liter fermentation unit, and everybody goes, 'biological weapons.'" (Actually, everybody probably goes, "Huh?") "Well, that's not necessarily the answer. The answer might be that Iraq wants to make single-cell protein so that it can feed its cows, so the cows can produce milk, so the children can have something to drink."

Yes, Scott Ritter is right. There may well be propaganda mills in America. It certainly looks like he is running one of them. ♦



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# Can We Do Without Saudi Oil?

*Alas, no.*

**By Irwin M. Stelzer**

So now we know: The Saudi Arabian regime is no friend of ours. Sure, they sell us oil and tell us that they keep the OPEC cartel from pushing prices through the roof. But their refusal to go along with OPEC price hawks is self-serving. They have huge wealth stashed away in investments here and in other Western countries, which means that they don't want oil prices to go so high as to trigger a serious recession that would depreciate the value of those investments.

So the Saudis grumble when oil prices hit a "low" of $20 but keep selling the oil that costs them somewhere between $2 and $5 per barrel to find and produce. And they worry that even that level of exploitation of the world's consumers—a profit of $15 per barrel isn't exactly chopped liver—is not enough to support the lifestyles of thousands of indolent princes, while at the same time continuing to bribe the country's work-averse young masses with the free telephones, water, almost-free gasoline, and other goodies that keep them from overthrowing the monarchy. Saudi Arabia's budget, which counts on oil exports for 70 percent of its revenues, will be in deficit this year, in good part because of princely payments to the royal family and handouts to the restless and unemployable Ph.D.s in Islamic studies being churned out by the nation's religious schools.

As Prince Bandar, the kingdom's ambassador to the United States, pointed out in an unguarded moment—of which he has very few—when a democracy's leaders lose touch with the people, they lose their jobs; when a monarchy's leaders lose touch with their subjects, they lose their heads. Which is why the royal family (numbering by some estimates as few as 7,000, by others as many as 30,000) got so nervous when Sheikh Hamoud al-Shuaibi, a Saudi cleric, seemed to include the royals in his recent declaration of a holy war against "whoever supports the infidel"—a category that might well include a regime that allows American soldiers to be stationed in Saudi Arabia, even if they are there to protect the country from being overrun by Iraq.

And which is why, as a number of devastating articles in the weeks since September 11 have made clear, the rulers of this land that sits atop 25 percent of the world's proven reserves of oil have been playing a double game. Even as the Saudi regime has accepted American protection and nurtured its longstanding relationship with Washington, it has also been playing footsie with the organization that murdered thousands of Americans in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

This means that when we finish with our work in Afghanistan, if we take seriously George W. Bush's pledge to root out those who harbor terrorists or support them in any way, we will eventually have to decide what to do about Saudi Arabia. We will have to take seriously Crown Prince Abdullah's August letter to President Bush, in which the Saudi ruler wrote that "a time comes when peoples and nations part. . . . It is time for the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to look at their separate interests." Great idea.

But what about that oil? If push comes to shove can we do without it? Not a chance. America consumes almost 19 million barrels of oil every day, and produces fewer than 8 million. The balance comes from overseas suppliers, with Canada and Saudi Arabia each providing some 15 percent of our imports, Venezuela 14 percent, Mexico 11 percent, Nigeria about 8 percent, and Iraq about 6 percent.

We are, it should be noted, dependent not only on those countries from which we buy oil directly. Oil is a fungible product, and a shutdown of production in any country, even one from which we buy little oil, will affect the price we pay our own suppliers.

To say that not all of the nations on which we rely are

*Irwin M. Stelzer is a contributing editor to* The Weekly Standard, *director of regulatory studies at the Hudson Institute, and a columnist for the Sunday Times (London).*



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exactly friendly to the United States is an understatement. The Saudis can be counted on so long as the regime in place is one that needs the money from oil sales. But it is not clear that the valves would remain open were bin Laden's crowd, or its equivalent, to take over. To those folks, cash would be less attractive than injuring the United States: They seem, for instance, to prefer caves to palaces. We know that Iraq, second to Saudi Arabia with almost 11 percent of the world's known oil reserves, wishes us ill, and periodically manipulates production to raise prices. Venezuela, which ranks with the Saudis in importance as a source of our imported oil, is run by a president whose hero is Fidel Castro, who is dedicated to bringing down "Western imperialism," and whose support of bin Laden is so overt that Washington has been compelled to recall our ambassador "for consultations."

When we look further down the ranking of countries blessed with significant reserves, we find that Iraq is followed by the United Arab Emirates and by perhaps the world's most famous ingrate, Kuwait, each with a bit more than 9 percent of the world's known reserves. We have less than 3 percent of the world's known reserves, about the same portion as neighboring Mexico. Canada, although rich in natural gas, has relatively small known reserves of oil that are economically recoverable at anything like current prices. Russia, the new "hot" area for oil exploration, has substantial reserves and, with large-scale investment, can significantly expand its production. But lacking sufficient pipeline capacity, Russia can't increase exports significantly before several billions are spent and at least five years pass. Besides, it is not unreasonable to question the wisdom of developing a new energy policy that markedly increases our reliance on a country that has yet to establish itself as a reliable geopolitical partner.

Even these figures understate our dependence on the Saudis. Enough oil is known to exist in the United States to maintain current production levels for about 10 years, and in Canada for about 8 years; the Saudis can tap their reserves for over 80 years without slowing output. There is worse: It is well known that the Saudis haven't really attempted to explore for new reserves because they already know precisely where some 260 billion barrels are located. "You don't plant potatoes when you have a cellar full of spuds," a grizzled denizen of America's oil patch once told me. Not only are the Saudis sitting on the world's largest known reserves, they are also the only country with existing excess capacity, and therefore the only country in a position to increase production quickly should some other supplier withdraw from the market or be knocked out of action.

In short, Saudi Arabia is and will remain the kingpin of the oil world, able to pump enough oil to satisfy America's thirst if it chooses. But should this regime come to believe that its survival requires unsheathing the oil weapon, or should a regime less wedded to cash flow come to power, supplies might be cut off. In the latter case, analysts would suddenly find themselves following the words of a bin Laden oil minister more closely than those of Alan Greenspan when they prepare their forecasts of the course of the American economy.

In the long run, then, if things continue as they have, we will increasingly be dependent on a shaky, despotic regime that uses the proceeds of its oil sales to support the gangs that aim to destroy us, and to educate its young to hate us, after skimming off enough to support its princes' penchant for yachts, women, and Johnny Walker Black Label. In a worse case, we will see our supplies controlled by a regime driven more by hatred than by greed.

This is not a new problem. Post World War II history is replete with efforts by administrations, Democratic and Republican, to free America from dependence on Saudi Arabia and its cartel colleagues. As I have noted in an essay for the Hudson Institute, when the Arabs first unsheathed the oil weapon in October 1973 in response to America's support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War, President Nixon responded: "Let us set as our national goal . . . that by the end of this decade we will have developed the potential to meet our own energy needs without depending on any foreign sources."

Not to be outdone by his predecessor, President Ford pursued the illusory goal of self-sufficiency by attacking both the supply side—encouraging greater use of coal and providing greater incentives for domestic exploration—and the demand side (auto fuel efficiency standards), while at the same time creating a Strategic Petroleum Reserve as a buffer against another shortage.

Jimmy Carter proved that failure to craft a successful "energy policy" is bipartisan. He created the Department of Energy to wage what he unfortunately termed "the moral equivalent of war" (which quickly became known by its acronym, MEOW, and didn't strike terror into the hearts of OPEC). The usual mix of supply-side subsidies and demand-side constraints followed, notwithstanding the failure of such efforts in the past, as President Carter appeared, sweater-clad, to urge Americans to shiver a bit more in the winter and sweat a bit more in the summer—and to do without hot water in federal facilities such as the restrooms of airports.

By the end of the 1980s, we were more dependent on imported oil than ever before. So George Bush the elder decided to meet the threat to our oil supplies created by



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Saddam Hussein's march into Kuwait en route to Saudi Arabia in a more direct fashion. He sent half a million troops and several aircraft carriers to the Gulf to defend a corrupt, despotic regime in which we would have no interest were it not sitting atop a large pool of oil (100 million barrels already found, much more awaiting exploration), and athwart the road to Saudi Arabia.

And there things have stood, with only trivial changes in U.S. policy in the decade since. The new Bush administration's attempt to develop an energy policy turns out to be, like many before it, a stew concocted to please pressure groups from the nuclear, oil, and coal industries, with side dishes to delight supporters of energy from renewable if not terribly reliable sources such as the wind and the sun. It is perhaps best described by the line attributed to that great philosopher Yogi Berra: "I came to a fork in the road, and I took it."

The best that can be said for this latest grand scheme for America's energy future is that it was developed before the terror attack on America made business as usual in oil markets more risky even than before. Now we know that it would be imprudent in the extreme to assume that the Saudi royal family will remain in Riyadh, rather than pulling up stakes and moving to the South of France and to London's Dorchester Hotel on a permanent, year-round basis. This introduces a further degree of uncertainty into an energy supply situation in which we are already in perpetual danger of a sudden cut-off of crucial oil. The unfortunate fact is that God saw fit to put the oil in places run by a lot of people who just don't like us.

In the post-September 11 world, we can forget about all of the subsidies the administration's plan would provide to increase electricity production. The market reaction to the short-term California shortage last summer—enough new capacity to produce a glut of electricity and a price collapse—shows that this is an area the government had best leave to the market. Besides, few generating plants any longer rely on oil as a fuel. The supply of natural gas can also be left to market forces: It is extraordinarily responsive to price changes, as the spurt in drilling when prices rose clearly demonstrates.

Oil is where the rubber hits the road in terms of national security. As far ahead as we can see, it is oil, refined into gasoline, that will keep the wheels of the economy turning. Nuclear can substitute for coal, and natural gas for both and for oil in stationary uses—like power generators—but it's safe to assume that engines that run on something other than gasoline will not be significant for a good long while. And this irreplaceable gasoline accounts for about 45 percent of all our oil consumption.

Those who think that we can reduce our dependence on the Saudi royals should think again. Sure, it is a good idea to increase the pace at which we develop our own reserves. But consider the possible contribution of the much-contested Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The best guess is that there are some 10.3 billion barrels of reserves to be had there and in abutting state and native lands, of which the pessimists guess about 4 billion are recoverable at today's prices, a figure that optimists would double. Applying a variety of rule-of-thumb estimates about how much can be produced and shipped in any year from a field that size, Howard Gruenspecht, resident scholar at Resources for the Future, estimates that at prices of around $20 per barrel we would get maybe one million barrels per day from ANWR. And that won't be until somewhere between 2010 and 2020, even if Congress acts promptly to open the area to drilling. By then, our consumption of oil, now running at about 19 million barrels daily, will have increased by a good bit more than what we will be getting from ANWR.

That doesn't mean that we shouldn't do all that we can, consistent with a market-based environmental policy, to increase domestic production. And we should of course diversify our supply sources, especially if we can persuade neighboring Mexico to allow us to invest in its oil industry, which is now a state-run morass so short of capital that it has allowed its known reserves to fall in half in the past decade.

But in the end, there is almost nothing that we can do on the supply side that will enable us not to care about the future of Saudi Arabia. Nor is there much relief in prospect on the demand side. Gruenspecht, who has more data about the oil demand and supply situation at his fingertips than any other expert, has run through some interesting calculations about the savings to be had by mandating tighter fuel efficiency standards, one of the centerpieces of any conservation program.

There are some 200 million cars and light trucks (the latter include SUVs, minivans, and pick-ups) on America's roads, with an average life of roughly 15 years. Vehicles seven years old or newer account for about half of all the vehicle miles traveled in any year. This means that eight years down the road, any tightening of standards now will still be affecting only half of the miles being driven. Only new vehicles, of which there are some 16 million produced in any year, would be subject to tighter efficiency standards, and not immediately, since those new standards would have to be phased in to give manufacturers time to adjust. Do some quick arithmetic and it turns out that a 25 percent increase in efficiency standards phased in over five years, now set at 27.5 miles for cars and 20.7 miles for light trucks, would, in a little over a decade, reduce consumption by a bit more than one million barrels per day. The full effect, which would not be



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Peter Steiner

felt until two decades from now, would be twice as large.

Throw into the policy mix Gruenspecht's pet program—auto insurance rates that reflect miles driven rather than being set without reference to how often you expose yourself and your vehicle to insured risk—and a 50 cent per gallon tax on gasoline, and you will reduce consumption immediately, but not by enough to change the hard fact of our dependence on Saudi oil. "It is hard to imagine that the world would be in good shape without Saudi Arabia," concludes Gruenspecht.

This leaves us with very few options. We can continue to ignore the Saudis' support of terrorists, and remain guarantors of the regime's survival, not abandoning it as we did the shah in Iran when the mullahs took over. We can, of course, throw in a bit of exhortation about democratic reforms, to which the response will undoubtedly be that such a path was what led the shah to his hasty exit. Asked some years ago what our energy policy is, I replied "aircraft carriers." That is as good a description as any of our present predicament. And it is about all we have to rely on at the moment.

It also leaves us with one overriding strategic imperative: We must make clear that in the event of an upheaval in Saudi Arabia, we will take control of, protect, and run the kingdom's oil fields, which American oil companies originally developed after paying substantial sums for the right to do so. This may be a difficult policy to defend in the post-imperialist era, but that doesn't make planning for this contingency any less necessary. Our State Department is creative; surely, if called upon, it would be able to figure out an arrangement for operating the oilfields that would safeguard our supply and win the blessing of a revenue-hungry regime with a stake in the continued flow of oil. And surely such a regime, if it did not exist, could be invented.

Before dismissing this as fantasy, consider that it is not very different from what we did in Kuwait, when we seized the oil fields from Saddam Hussein and put them in the hands of a friendly regime, one that remains dependent on us for its survival. In the end, we need the oil, they need the money, and, most of all, whoever is in power in these countries needs America to protect it from the Saddams and bin Ladens who are breathing down their necks.

We can do all the good things: increase domestic production, diversify sources of supply, finally learn how to set up an adequate Strategic Petroleum Reserve that does not discourage private companies from carrying inventories, and decrease our reliance on oil by conserving and pushing technologies that use fuels other than oil. Programs once deemed too costly to pursue might well make sense in this new era of heightened threats to our oil supplies.

But do all of these things, and we still end up with our future tied to Saudi oil. Unless, of course, we are willing, really willing, to pay the price of independence by raising and re-raising the price of oil, taxing imports and taxing them some more, until they are so expensive that we just don't import much oil, and are therefore free to set our foreign policy independent of coalitions that undermine our war on terrorism and seek to force us to abandon Israel to the tender mercies of Arafat and his Arab allies. Something around $5 per gallon should do the trick. ♦



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# TR's Greatness

## *Edmund Morris's return to Teddy Roosevelt*

By David Brooks

John Singer Sargent's 1903 portrait. Bettmann / CORBIS. All others: Hulton Archive.

In 1903, in the midst of his struggles to build the Panama Canal, President Theodore Roosevelt was asked by Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia University, for a list of recommended books. The list, which Roosevelt wrote out during a train ride, is classic TR—demonstrating at once his omnivorous reading and his little boy's desire to show off:

"Parts of Herodotus; the first and seventh books of Thucydides; all of Polybius, a little of Plutarch, Sophocles' Orestean trilogy and *Seven Against Thebes*, Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Bacchae*; Aristophanes' *Frogs*. Parts of the *Politics* of Aristotle. . . ."

As the train bounced southward, Roosevelt toted up his favorites. He listed *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night* along with Macaulay's essays, Carlyle's "Frederick the Great," Mahan's "Types of Naval Officers," Tolstoy's "Sebastopol" as well as *Tom Sawyer*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The White Company*. In all, he listed 114 authors—adding, "Of course I have forgotten a great many." No president before or since could have poured out such a roster (not withstanding that *Seven Against Thebes* was actually written by Aeschylus) or would have made time, while president, to continue this sort of reading.

Fresh from the public-relations disaster of *Dutch*, his widely panned postmodern memoir of Ronald Reagan, Edmund Morris has finally produced *Theodore Rex*, the second volume of the biography that began with the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* in 1979. That first volume from Morris was nothing short of brilliant. It put me off reading biographies for nearly a year because every other one I picked up seemed pale in comparison. This new installment, covering Roosevelt's presidency from 1901 to 1909, is less gripping to read, but captures Roosevelt's growing sophistication as well as all the endearing and exasperating vitality of the man.

**Theodore Rex**
by Edmund Morris
Random House, 864 pp., $35

Covering the presidency, Morris does not have the benefit of the sort of dramatic and varied scenery he had for the first part of Roosevelt's life: Fifth Avenue, Harvard, the badlands of South Dakota, San Juan Hill. But amidst the volumes of official White House papers and the century-old policy debates, Morris hasn't lost touch with Roosevelt the man. The effect of this book is surprisingly political. Morris depicts TR as the president who was able to create something that has often been dreamed about but almost never realized: a vital center. By temperament TR was a dervish, and yet, Morris emphasizes, his instinct was to seek political equilibrium. He balanced opposing forces and embodied the middling current of American opinion without ever being wishy-washy or passive, as most centrists are.

The vitality is what makes this fun reading. Roosevelt ate about twice as much as a normal man, and swallowed a river of coffee each day (one doctor

*David Brooks is a senior editor at* The Weekly Standard.



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astutely observed that he was driving his machine so hard it would surely conk out prematurely). He dragged his guests on forced marches through Rock Creek Park and would lead them wading through streams in winter without even breaking his flow of conversation. He would speed through meetings, barking, "Tell me what you have to say. Quickly! Quickly!" He amused himself while president with exuberant tennis matches (no cameras allowed) and a game in which he and his trainers would don helmets and chest protectors and beat each other with singlesticks.

His closest friends and admirers were well aware that at one level he had never really grown up. "You must always remember that the president is about six," noted Cecil Spring-Rice, the best man at his first wedding. On his birthday, Elihu Root sent him a note which read, "I congratulate you on attaining the respectable age of forty-six. You have made a very good start in life and your friends have great hopes for you when you grow up."

But there was another side to the man. Roosevelt had lost his first wife, Alice, when he was twenty-five; burdened by an unceasing grief, he could barely bring himself to mention her as long as he lived. He could experience fierce internal turmoil. In *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, Morris showed him pacing his bedroom at night, fiercely berating himself, slamming his fist into his palm, for betraying her memory by falling in love again. He was many things and their opposite: a rich boy who felt more at home with the middle class; a weak asthmatic who forced himself to be strong and courageous; an imperious man who could bore a dinner table with his monologues but also a considerate man who interrupted a cabinet meeting when he noticed some of his older secretaries were cold and built a fire for them himself. As Morris observes, "He struggled to reconcile his love of strong language with the need for dignified expression. It had always been thus with him: conflict between belligerence and dignified restraint, between animal brutality and human decency, between pessimism and optimism, or, as his perceptive friend Owen Wister put it, 'between what he knew and his wish not to know it.'"

The things that were pure in him were his lust for action of any sort (and his corresponding contempt for people who did not share that lust) and the complete identification he felt between himself and his country. "Personal and patriotic pride throbbed as one in his breast," as Morris puts it. At a time when America was emerging as the world's leading power, perhaps he was right to link his own manic energy with his nation's.

To achieve American greatness, Roosevelt pursued a few policies unambiguously: preserving national forests, building up the Navy, exerting American power in the global policeman's role (he practically used the phrase) so that world order could be preserved. At home, however, he mostly restrained himself. He despised theorists who pushed grand schemes, and he was too much a conservative to embrace radical change. He used his power to balance interests, Morris argues. His speeches could sometimes devolve into a mess of equivocations because every time he stated a strong belief, he would follow it with a series of counterarguments to placate the people he had just offended.

His policy toward the trusts was typical. Though he had absolutely no interest in money himself (it was one of the few subjects that bored him), he understood that the free-enterprise system produced the wealth that was the root of the nation's greatness. He despised the muckrakers (he coined the word, in fact), who saw only the dark and corrupt side of capitalism. He distrusted populist cries to redistribute wealth. "Probably the greatest harm done by vast wealth is the harm that we of moderate means do ourselves when we let the vices of envy and hatred enter deep into our own hearts," he declared. And he thought socialist schemes to have the government, say, take over the railroads were absurd. You have no idea how "inefficient and undependable" federal workers are, he lectured one proponent of nationalization. To have government workers run private enterprise would be "a disaster."

Yet, when he saw the John D. Rockefellers and the J.P. Morgans and the great titans of Wall Street in action, he was massively unimpressed. "It tires me to talk to rich men. You expect a man of millions, the head of a great industry, to be a man worth hearing; but as a rule they don't know anything outside their own businesses." Sometimes ennui turned to anger when he saw men of his own class putting their money interest before the national interest. His greatest



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intra-party battles were with the Wall Street wing of the Republican party. He lashed out at "the most dangerous members of the criminal class—the criminals of great wealth."

In the midst of one of his fights with the money wing of the GOP, he attended a Gridiron dinner. He noticed one of his chief opponents, Senator Joseph Foraker, had been placed just in front of him, at a table perpendicular to the main table. Then he looked in the dinner program, which had caricatures of prominent guests and jokey captions. The one underneath Foraker's read, "All coons look alike to me."

Roosevelt's anger boiled over. As soon as the fish course was served, Roosevelt announced he would like to speak immediately. He rose and delivered a harsh lecture to "Millionaires Row" (J.P. Morgan was three places to his left). Corporations were going to have to get used to the fact that they would be policed by federal power, he said, to snuff out their deceptive practices. Then he turned to Foraker, a plutocrat spokesman on Capitol Hill, and held up the program. "'All coons look alike to me,'" he read. Then he threw down the program in disgust. "Well all coons do not look alike to me!" he nearly shouted. The Gridiron event was a shambles. The other courses could not be served. Food grew cold on the plates. The regular program was scrapped. Foraker was given a chance to respond and Roosevelt responded to his response. The episode is a far cry from the pre-scripted presidential appearances we have today, but its ferocity was typical of the battles that sometimes raged between TR and Wall Street.

They were battles Roosevelt won. Foraker left Washington in disgrace after it was discovered he was accepting a form of lavish bribes. The titans of Wall Street ended up backing Roosevelt to such an extent that he was embarrassed by the size of their campaign contributions. "Corporate cunning has developed faster than the laws of the nation and state," he said after reviewing the fund-raising scene. "Sooner or later, unless there is a readjustment, there will come a riotous, wicked, murderous day of atonement."

*Above: Teddy Roosevelt delivers a 1902 speech.*
*Opposite page: The president in profile in 1905.*

And yet through it all, his policies were temperate. Faced with a coal strike, he tried to mediate between the two sides. In foreign policy, Morris emphasizes, Roosevelt's approach was much the same. He did not hesitate to assert American power when it was called for, but he won his Nobel prize for his neutrality in settling the Russo-Japanese war by a series of subtle pressures designed to maneuver the two sides to an equal peace.

"What none of the diplomats appreciated," Morris writes, "as they obeyed his instructions, was Theodore Roosevelt's lifelong obsession with balance. He loved the poised spin of the big globe in his office, the rhythm of neither-nor sentences, the give and take of boxing, the ebb and flow of political power play. His initial tilt in the Russo-Japanese war . . . had straightened like the needle of a stepped-off scale."

Morris's theme nicely corrects the stereotypical depiction of TR as an overgrown blusterer perpetually heading off on self-glorifying causes. But I wonder if Morris tidies him up too much. Roosevelt knew how to choose an enemy and exploit a political moment, and once he had selected a foe, he launched his attack with a vigor that upset equilibriums and transformed the status quo. Moreover, he was a fiercely moral fighter, not a balance-of-power cynic. His policies stand in stark contrast to those of the European realpolitik school. If he thought he was pursuing a just cause (and every one of his causes was also God's cause), he would pursue it with the fervor of an evangelist. He was more a subtle crusader than a cagey diplomat or an aspiring Metternich.

In one of the most interesting episodes of the book, Morris describes how Roosevelt averted war with Germany in 1902. The crisis started because Venezuela owed $62 billion to



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**The American Hercules.**

*A 1905 cartoon depicting Roosevelt as the American Hercules.*

an international consortium of lenders headed by Great Britain and Germany, but had no means to pay the money back. Concluding that the only thing Venezuela had of any value was land, the Kaiser's Germany began preparations to blockade and then occupy part of the country. The Germans anticipated that this plan might be considered by the American as an affront to the Monroe Doctrine, a doctrine which, for Roosevelt, had the status of holy writ. So military planners on the Wilhelmstrasse began work on contingency plans to invade the United States.

Roosevelt called in the German ambassador and told him that the United States would "be obliged to interfere, by force if necessary," if the Germans took any action against Venezuela. He gave the Germans ten days to back down. The Germans and their allies seized four Venezuelan gunboats anyway. "We will do whatever is necessary for our navy, even if it displeases the Yankees. Never fear!" the Kaiser scoffed. Roosevelt dispatched Admiral Dewey with a squadron of battleships to the region, and used diplomatic pressure to peel Britain away from Germany. Finally, on the night before Roosevelt's ultimatum was to expire, Germany, faced with the newly strengthened U.S. Navy, backed down, announcing it would accept American arbitration in the dispute. It was a small Cuban Missile Crisis moment, won with a show of military muscle. Surely the Germans concluded that Theodore Roosevelt, the man who was fired to the core with visions of America's historical greatness, was not to be messed with in his own hemisphere.

Morris spends little time on Roosevelt's religious ideas, or on what you might call the moral foundations of his various indignations. But time after time, Roosevelt was motivated by an electrically charged sense of righteousness. His political decisions were shaped by a profoundly felt vision of God's plan for mankind and America's role in that plan, not by a merely secular view of what the correlation of forces should be. Morris mentions that his speeches often consisted of a series of thumping clichés, but those clichés were attempts to articulate principles to which he was fiercely committed but which he couldn't express in prosaic terms. He wasn't omnidirectional, as he sometimes seemed to be. His moral sense channeled his energy along consistent tracks.

One of the wonderful motifs in *Theodore Rex* is Morris's use of two nineteenth-century figures, John Hay and Henry Adams, as foils for Roosevelt. They come in and out of the book as admiring, dyspeptic, or wise observers, popping up in times of triumph and defeat, always less active and spiritually driven than the president himself.

Hay, who had worked with Lincoln, could joke with Roosevelt: "If there is one thing for which I admire you more than anything else, Theodore, it is your original discovery of the Ten Commandments." Behind his back, he also recognized that TR had "plenty of brains and a heart of gold," and paid him the highest compliment by asking him to wear a ring that contained a strand of Lincoln's hair during his inauguration in 1905, with the comment that Hay considered Roosevelt one of the men who truly understood the Great Emancipator.

Henry Adams appears in the book mostly as an acrid critic. "Theodore is a total, abject, and hopeless failure," he wrote with satisfaction early in the administration. "At this rate he will bring the government to a standstill in a year." He complained when invited to dine at the White House, and then afterwards described what a miserable time he had had. Yet even he softened toward Roosevelt, when he realized that the man he had ridiculed so long would soon be leaving office. "The old house will seem dull and sad," Adams wrote, "when my Theodore has gone."

Morris's third volume will presumably cover the post-presidential years, when Roosevelt's enthusiasms swung wildly, when he was a more desperate and sadder figure. But in this book Morris has shown Roosevelt at the top of his powers, not just the big talker, but the masterful executive, pulling at the strings of government with enormous skill but without ever losing sight of his high ideals.

In June 1904 he was nominated at the Republican convention by Frank S. Black, the former governor of New York. It's a speech that resonates at the present moment in our history.

> The nation basking today in the quiet of contentment and repose may be still on the deadly circuit and tomorrow writhing in the turmoil of war. This is the time when great figures must be kept in front. If the pressure is great, the material to resist it must be granite and iron. Whether we wish it or not, America is abroad in this world. Her interests are on every street, her name is on every tongue. Those interests so sacred and stupendous should be trusted only to the care of those whose power and skill and courage have been tested and approved.

Our leaders could do worse than infuse themselves with the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, who was unshaking in his courage, balanced in his tactics, and righteous in his cause. ♦



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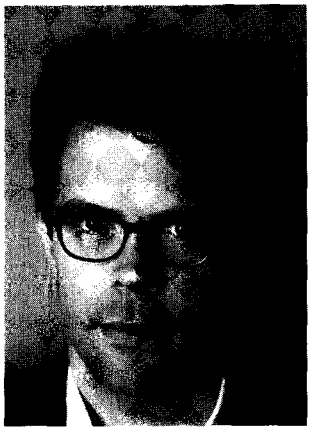
# Correcting Oprah

*The artistic ambivalence of Jonathan Franzen.*

**BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Jonathan Franzen has the sort of ambition rare for an American novelist these days. His aim is to write great and enduring books that grapple with large social issues even as he offers minute dissections of the day-to-day lives of their characters.

To this end, he has endured penury, writer's block, and the indifference of the *New York Times*. Over the last thirteen years, the forty-two-year-old Franzen has published three large novels and a much-discussed 1996 *Harper's* essay on the difficulties of being a contemporary novelist. A serious reader of fiction had time in 1945 to devour twenty-five new novels a year, he declared; in 1995, the same sort of reader might make it through five. How can a real writer survive in a vast wasteland of a country whose "notion of culture resembles a menu to be pointed at and clicked"?



**The Corrections**
by Jonathan Franzen
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 568 pp., $26

That essay bore a distinct resemblance to a 1961 essay, "Writing American Fiction," in which Philip Roth complained that "American reality . . . stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination." Where Roth wondered how a novelist could compete when the country he lived in produced real-life characters like quiz-show cheat Charles Van Doren, Franzen wondered how a novelist could thrive in a nation where books didn't matter any longer.

Jonathan Franzen, in other words, believes himself to be a writer whose time is out of joint. But so has nearly every ambitious novelist in every generation before his. As Roth's snotty essay indicated forty years ago, many artists are inclined to ascribe the tortuous difficulties in producing work that matters to the failures of the surrounding society.

But what happens to such writers when the ridiculous mass culture they fear suddenly showers them with praise and love and millions of dollars? When *Portnoy's Complaint* became a colossal bestseller, the cognitive dissonance caused by his new wealth and celebrity was too great a weight for Philip Roth to bear, as he revealed years later in *The Anatomy Lesson*. Roth was crippled by a phantom back problem that had no medical basis but which made it impossible for him to write.

One wonders what attack Franzen's psyche will stage, now that he is the fortunate author of *The Corrections*. Released in September, Franzen's third novel has been reviewed ecstatically by critics who have said exactly what Franzen wanted to hear. He had done it. He had written a serious book in a great tradition, one that combined his hunger to "Address the Culture and Bring News to the Mainstream" (the capital letters are his) with "my desire to write about the things closest to me, to lose myself in the characters and locales I loved."

*The Corrections* is a book in which a central character says to a Lithuanian who had been tortured in Soviet jails that America is a "different kind of prison." But though the idea is implicitly supported by the author, this "different kind of prison" has clasped Franzen and *The Corrections* to its bosom. The book had already earned him $1 million even before publication, in part from a movie sale. It debuted on the *New York Times* bestseller list at number five before proceeding to number one in a few weeks. The novelist who had used the pages of *Harper's* to decry the popularity of Michael Crichton and John Grisham had now joined them at the summit.

Then, from the very bowels of this "different kind of prison," came a new and fiendishly clever torture for a novelist who believes himself "solidly in a high-art literary tradition." *The Corrections* was chosen by Oprah Winfrey as the October selection of her book club. She described the novel as perhaps the best in the five-year history of her club, a monthly feature of her daytime talk show that has revolutionized the publishing industry by making instant and mammoth bestsellers out of fiction with a certain literary sensibility.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux immediately went back to press and printed an extra 500,000 copies of *The Corrections*. Winfrey's anointing had added at least $1 million to Franzen's personal fortune, not to mention hundreds of thousands of readers. Franzen's novel, torn from his body over seven years of rough strife, is making him rich, famous, and popular.

Franzen understands there is a problem here. The only character in *The Corrections* with any integrity sacrifices his chance to make millions off a stock sale and a patent because to do so would violate his conscience. The wealthiest character in his book is also the one who seeks to take selfish advantage of his father's integrity by blackmailing his way into an IPO. One of the chief satirical targets in *The Corrections* is the mania for brandnames that

*John Podhoretz is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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leads, say, a Nordic cruise ship to call itself the *Gunnar Myrdal* and feed its passengers in the "Søren Kierkegaard Dining Room."

So how could Jonathan Franzen keep silent over the branding of his dust jacket with the giant "O" indicating an "Oprah's Book Club" selection? If Franzen had appeared happily on Oprah's set, surely some wise-ass writing in *Slate* or *McSweeney's* would relish taking note of the obvious hypocrisy. He couldn't let that happen, and he didn't. He made slighting references to his good fortune in more august settings, like National Public Radio's show "Fresh Air." At literary bookstores, readers would come up to Franzen and express dismay at the Oprah-fication of his novel. In keeping with that notion, he told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that *The Corrections* might be a "hard book for that audience."

Finally, Oprah had had enough. She withdrew her offer to have him appear on her show. Other novelists, who would do almost anything to have been chosen, reacted with untrammeled outrage (hoping, perhaps, that their public denunciations of Franzen and praise of Oprah might cause her to look favorably upon their next novels). Editors in New York raged as well. No one has done more to keep the novel alive than Oprah, they insisted. How dare Franzen be so ungrateful?

You have to read Franzen's book to grasp the real secret behind his dismay at his inclusion in the Oprah canon. *The Corrections* is a story about a dysfunctional family. Elderly father has Parkinson's. Mother is sexually frustrated. Daughter is a closeted lesbian. Elder son is dominated by his rich wife. Younger son is a failed academic. Everyone is depressed. And in the end, they all come together for a final family Christmas in an overstuffed home in the heart of the Midwest.

The lesbian daughter, a chef, is irritated by a review her restaurant receives in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. It praises "the 'perfectionist' Denise Lambert for a 'must-have experience' that 'single-handedly' put Philadelphia on the 'map of cool.'" Denise fears that the review makes her restaurant sound "crappy and middlebrow."

Jonathan Franzen, himself a scion of the St. Louis suburbs, fears more than anything being thought of as middlebrow. Franzen has arranged his life to resemble that of a bohemian writer from another era, complete with garret and vodka and a garbage can stuffed with years of useless pages. Peel away Franzen's narrative intricacies, his often overwrought prose, and his vision of America as a prison of affluence, and what you have left is a really good TV movie.

This is not to say *The Corrections* is worthless. There is wonderful stuff in its 568 pages. A long chapter devoted to the journey taken by the elderly Lamberts on the Nordic cruise ship is hilariously funny. "We Norwegians are great readers," one passenger explains, bragging that her husband annually "reads one work by every winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature." Her husband modestly declares, "It is safe to say that I have read more deeply into Henrik Pontoppidan than most."

Another passage details the effort by Gary Lambert, the eldest son, to win a pointless argument with his wife in a struggle that extends over three weeks—in which her most potent weapon is the calm assurance that he is suffering from clinical depression. Franzen's description of Gary's internal struggle is masterful: "He was afraid that if the idea that he was depressed gained currency, he would forfeit his right to his opinions. He would forfeit his moral certainties; every word he spoke would become a symptom of the disease; he would never again win an argument."

But Franzen never quite makes us believe that his five disparate characters really inhabit the same family. He gives them all quirks and corners, strengths and weaknesses, but there is no real psychic struggle or commonality between them. And he veers uncomfortably between an effort to portray their lives realistically and a desire to satirize the state of America and the world at the end of history. The satire is laid on with a trowel. And the dreadful vulgarity and lack of nuance in Franzen's political vision suggest that while he may be hungry to "Address the Culture and Bring News to the Mainstream," the wisdom he has to impart is nothing more than warmed-over Katha Pollitt.

Chip, the family failure, finds himself in Vilnius trying to fool American investors into believing that the entire nation has become a for-profit company. His months there are eye-opening: "In both countries, wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few; any meaningful distinction between private and public sectors had disappeared; captains of commerce lived in a ceaseless anxiety that drove them to expand their empires ruthlessly; ordinary citizens lived in ceaseless fear of being fired and ceaseless confusion about which powerful private interest owned which formerly public institution on any given day; and the economy was fueled largely by the elite's insatiable demand for luxury."

Chip's ill-gotten gains in Vilnius are stolen from him by border guards. That plot development, and the concluding pages of *The Corrections*, uncloak Franzen as a simplistic moralizer who punishes his naughty characters and rewards his good ones. After a stint of selflessness towards his sick father, Chip finds instant happiness with a Jewish nursing-home doctor who bears him twins.

Chip's growth is mirrored by the spiritual progress of his intolerant, homophobic, and anti-Semitic mother, Enid—who finds she actually loves being "carried around the room while the klezmer music played" at Chip's wedding. And though she is never told the truth about her daughter's lesbianism, a single conversation at the bridge table with a homophobe causes her to end a friendship of forty years' duration. Meanwhile, the lovely Denise gets a brand-new restaurant on the hot Smith Street corridor in fashionable Brooklyn, while materialistic Gary loses his shirt in a stock deal.

Jonathan Franzen *is* Oprah. And somewhere deep in his heart of hearts, he knows it. ♦



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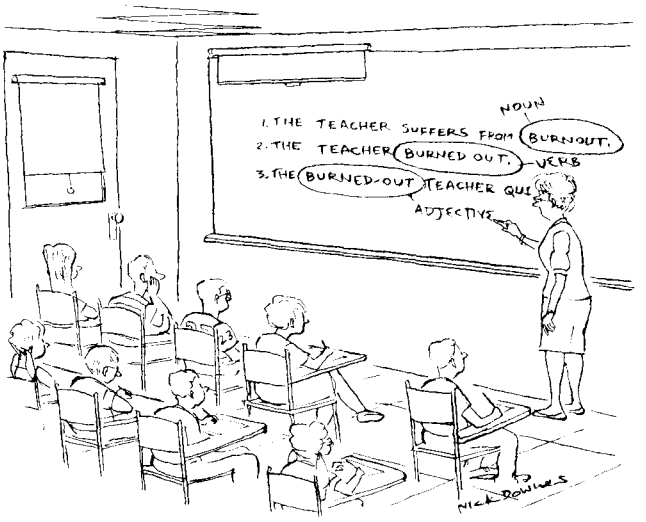


## More Sontags

This week's Susan Sontag Certificate—THE STANDARD READER's way of acknowledging inanity by artists and intellectuals—goes to the Columbia University faculty senate, which voted 46 to 0 to "reaffirm open discourse as a prime value in our community." Almost anywhere else, we'd applaud this affirmation of free speech. But the senate did it because, it claimed, "some student members of the Columbia community have felt pressure to curtail their opinions of the national response to the Sept. 11 attacks." It didn't cite any examples of students who had been stopped from denouncing the United States, primarily because there don't seem to be any examples. But the senate just wanted unanimously to get on record that students should feel free to do so.

As the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education notes, this is the same Columbia that disinvited John Leo and Dinesh D'Souza because they were, well, *not leftists*. The same Columbia where Ward Connerly's speech against affirmative action was howled down by students shouting "bigot" and "Uncle Tom." When Columbia doesn't just mean freedom for approved causes, the school will deserve applause for upholding free speech. In the meanwhile, we'll simply point out that the worst result of evil is the corruption of something good. ♦

**Book of the Week**

## Spillane His Guts

*It was easy.* **BY J. BOTTUM**

*The Mike Hammer Collection*, in 2 vols., by Mickey Spillane (New American Library, 513 pp. & 517 pp., $15 each).

Your first impulse will be to like Mickey Spillane. Here's a guy who was *loathed* by the 1950s literary establishment. He hated communism, organized crime, and district attorneys. His 1949 *I, the Jury* sold five million copies in its first paperback edition—and ended with detective Mike Hammer shooting the love of his life because she had killed his partner. "'How c-could you?' she gasped. I only had a moment before talking to a corpse, but I got it in. 'It was easy,' I said."

Long out of print—missing even from the Library of America's volumes canonizing pulp *noir*—Spillane's first six Mike Hammer novels have been reissued in one last effort to claim for him the fame that has enhaloed Hammett and Chandler.

It was worth a shot. *One Lonely Night* and *Kiss Me, Deadly* are more thrillers than mysteries, but they're fast-moving, hard-boiled, and—unlike most *noir*—make moral distinctions between good guys and bad guys. The famous prose isn't as clean as its parodies; to write low-class lines is a high-class art, and Spillane is the kind of writer who says "utilize" when he means "use." But there are enough lines like "The guy was dead as hell" to keep you going.

The only objectionable parts are the sex and violence. Unfortunately, sex and violence *are* the novels. It's not that Hammer lives in a world in which beautiful women tear off their blouses and moan "Make me" fifteen minutes after meeting him. Who could object to that? The problem is that they have to punch him in the jaw and get punched back before tearing off their blouses. You don't mind so much that his solution to male Communists is to cut them into pieces with a Tommy gun. But your skin starts to crawl when his solution to a female Communist is to rip off her dress and beat her, drooling over the sight of "a naked woman and a leather belt." (It's unnecessary effort. She had already been converted to democratic capitalism by her first encounter with Hammer—on a bearskin rug, no less.) And I'd just as soon not know exactly what is going on with the transvestite Juno, the homme fatale of *Vengeance is Mine*.

It's finally just too creepy and silly to be worth the effort. Sure, Spillane was hated by Commies, eggheads, and all the rest of the self-satisfied prigs of the 1950s. But even that isn't enough to make him a good read. ♦



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# Parody

**The Bush administration has appointed a new undersecretary of state for public diplomacy. Charlotte Beers, a career advertising executive, will lead a propaganda effort designed to convince people across the Middle East that the bombing of Afghanistan is directed against specific terrorists, not against Muslims generally. U.S. foreign policy, Ms. Beers says, is "definitely the most elegant brand I've ever had to work with." Previously, her best known "brands" were commercial products like Oscar Mayer all-beef wieners.** ***—News item***

MEMORANDUM

TO: Colin Powell

FROM: Charlotte Beers

DATE: November 19, 2001

SUBJECT: Ad Campaign Jingle

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Final draft from the copywriters. Goes to the tune of "My Bologna Has a First Name." Tests great with the focus groups. What do you think?

*Our target has but one name,*
*It's O-S-A-M-A.*
*But though we try real hard to aim,*
*Some stuff may go astray.*
*That doesn't mean we hate Islam,*
*To most of you we say "Salaam!"*
*Besides, you ought to thank Allah*
*We've still not used our biggest bomb.*



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# Releasing the "Confirmation Hostages"

**Bill Whalen is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.**

The attacks of September 11 exposed the federal government's need to enact critical reform, most notably in intelligence gathering, domestic security, and military preparedness.

Not to be overlooked is another improvement that is long overdue in Washington: revamping the current appointments process, which compromises the federal government's ability to respond to crises and to carry out core functions in times of both war and peace.

On the day of the attacks only 110 of 148 Senate-confirmed positions—related either directly or indirectly to America's war on terrorism—had been filled. That 74 percent rate is far better than the federal government as a whole, which had only 58 percent of its Senate-confirmed jobs filled as of September 11. Neither is an acceptable standard. The first figure reflects a mediocre "gentleman's C"; the second, a failure.

**The political gamesmanship that taints the appointments process continues to worsen,** even though the executive and legislative branches of government have changed partisan hands. By Ronald Reagan's seventh month in office, nearly 90 percent of his nominees had been confirmed; for Bill Clinton, the confirmation rate over the same period was 87 percent. But for George W. Bush, that rate has fallen to 81 percent. That's not progress.

How can Washington remedy this situation? One option is adopting the California model of state government appointments.

Like the president, California's governor has appointees who require confirmation by the State Senate. But the rules differ in Sacramento. Once a nomination is announced, an appointee can immediately exercise the full authority of the office instead of waiting to be empowered by the Senate. However, there's a catch. If the State Senate fails to act on the nomination within a year, the nominee is required to resign.

**By giving nominees full and immediate authority, a new administration could hit the ground running instead of being at the Senate's mercy for an indefinite amount of time.** If the Senate strongly objected to the nominee, it would speed up the confirmation process rather than let it languish.

There are two other ancillary benefits to consider. First, some members of Congress regard appointees as "hostages" only to be "released" (i.e., confirmed) in exchange for a ransom payment from the White House, usually in the form of more government spending. Taking away this leverage could be a way to enforce genuine fiscal discipline. Second, consider those nominees rejected solely on ideological grounds. If the Senate failed to act on a nomination for an entire year, it would be under pressure to demonstrate that its judgment was based on a nominee's competency, rather than partisan differences.

Washington has spoken loudly since September 11, promising a new spirit of unity. Why not reform the appointments process so that the real winners are Americans who believe that integrity rules the day in our nation's capital?

*— Bill Whalen*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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# Where does he get the energy?

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